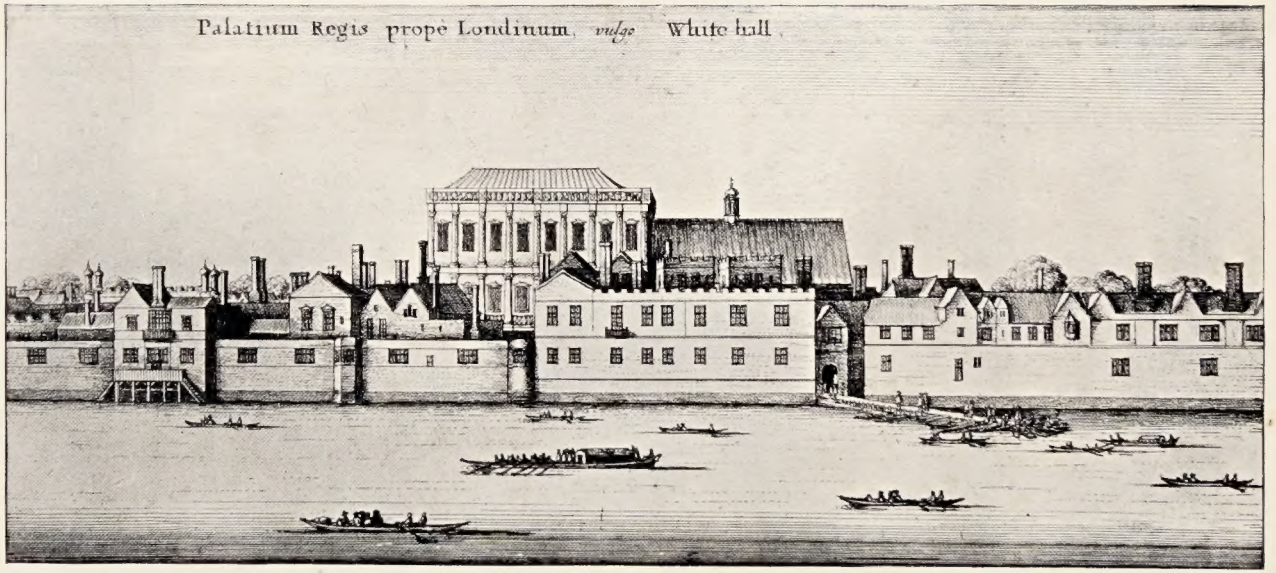
# LONDON IN BYGONE DAYS




LONDON IN THE 17TH CENTURY: THE PALACE OF WHITEHALL

*(From an engraving by Wenceslaus Hollar)*

# LONDON
# IN BYGONE DAYS

by Kenneth Hare

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## *To My Wife*

Puella delicatior
    Lepusculo et cuniculo
    Caeaque tela mollior . . .
Puella longe dulcior
    Quem mel sit Hyble . . .
Mihique longe charior
Auro, lapillis, purpura.

POLITIAN.

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## *Introductory*

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NO APOLOGY should be needed for a book which attempts the exceptionally difficult task of conveying to a modern reader something of that extremely elusive quality, the ' atmosphere of other days.' This is what I shall attempt to do in the chapters following. Accuracy of detail I have been at great pains to achieve, but it is scarcely to be hoped that I shall prove uniformly successful. Six centuries of London life is an extensive field.

An incidental part of my scheme is to undermine, where possible, some of the more common and popular misconceptions of history. People slide into such errors through a very natural tendency to accept statements as proven merely because they are constantly reiterated. Life is too short to verify every statement, and the bulk of what we assert for fact we have been forced, by the nature of things, to accept on trust. Highly sober and serious folk have believed that the ' sparhawk ' found its courage ooze away at the sight of the peacock, that the ape abominated children, and that the ostrich preferred a dish of horseshoes to any other that could be set before it. Sir Thomas Browne and other observers proved, at a late date in our history, that what had been always asserted upon such matters was much exaggerated. But every age has its horseshoe-devouring ostriches, and this of ours, as I hope to show, is no exception to the rule. But my method is that of the poet. It is not that of the historical specialist. My interest is in the men and

women of the past. My attempt—for what it may be worth—is to re-create 'the life of those times.' I am thrilled by the shows and splendours of historical pageantry, by the streets of Old London in their picturesque variety, by the shops and taverns and public gardens, and by those who shopped and drank and walked therein. I am intrigued, at a word, by all that a certain type of mind would dismiss as valueless or romantic, and I am indifferent to much that most people seek to find in histories—diplomacy, statistics, treaties, politics, economics, and the passionless marriages of crowned personages.

Very many people are vague about 'periods.' They do not see the past in proportion. I am talking, remember always, about those who have no time or bent for special studies. Perhaps it would be superfluous to waste time or thought upon the stupendous anachronisms of the picture palace. I have seen a Court ball presented in which gentlemen in full-bottomed wigs danced one-step. These absurdities—American for the most part—have a real influence. One cannot readily away with the visual impression. I saw a few days back several posters advertising a film which had to do with the execution of Anne Boleyn. The victim was portrayed between two executioners clad in scarlet from head to foot and, need I add, that the fatal axe was prominently displayed in the foreground? Now historically I understand the stroke was given by a famous executioner from Paris, brought over *ad hoc* by reason of his reputation for killing a victim instantaneously and painlessly. The sword—not axe—with which the stroke was given is said to have been carefully hidden away until the unfortunate woman's eyes had been bandaged, so that she should not be put to more terror than was inevitable. The scene then had some qualities which suggest the awakened sensibilities of

the present day. It had very little in common with that good old stock piece with which the film company were preparing to harrow up souls in the auditorium—Execution in the Olden Time. Am I taking 'the pictures' over seriously, making too much of a pother over trivialities? I think not, in view of the immense numbers to whom the films appeal. Besides, a legion of critics have written with immense superiority of the anachronisms and historical blunders of the Elizabethan theatre—clocks in 'Julius Cæsar,' Cinna's 'rhymes,' lions in Arden, and all the rest of it. Dr Johnson speaks of the 'imbecility' of the historical incongruities of 'Cymbeline.' But the Elizabethan plays were not closet performances; they had to appeal no less to the masses than the intellectuals, and it is as well to realise that—upon the films at least—we are making all the old mistakes over again, so that the attitude of superiority is a mistaken one.

What a well-worn expression is that of 'Old English,' and how loosely is it applied in popular parlance! One meets often enough in the country, landlords who pride themselves upon their 'Old English Fare.' But this Old English is in reality very far from old. What the landlord has in his head, one fancies, is some hazy tradition from the coaching days, and coaching did not reach its zenith until the Regency.

Sherry and Madeira were both Regency wines and, for great occasions, sillery, and brandy 'for heroes,' and port of course—port of which Lord Chancellor Eldon and his brother Lord Stowell declared they had drunk more than any two men in England. Yet Lords Panmure, Dufferin, and Blaney were a bibulous trio of six-bottle men and not to be passed over as mere chickens. Such were the beverages of those burly old days, when a fine claret or even that 'golden

generous Burgundy' of Charles II.'s days had fallen into disfavour, and were regarded as but 'thin washy stuff,' and not 'pretty drinking' at all.

They nourished themselves well, those Georgian forbears, and their eatables were as full of body as the drinkables with which they washed them down.

First would come the soup, mulligatawny or turtle. Then the fish, salmon or turbot, set amidst the classic fringe of smelts. Then saddle of mutton or roast beef, which fowls would follow 'as inevitably as night follows day.' Solid comfort was the mark, not Frenchified variety. And with the fowls the 'etceteras'—ham and tongue, sausage, pickles and stuffing. The enchanting Gronow, looking back upon a youth spent in London society, recalls the 'etceteras' with satisfaction. This 'little bazaar of good things' is his expression, if I remember it right. One gathers that real skill was required to maintain upon one fork, delicately and contemporaneously, a small sample of fowl, ham, tongue, pickle, sausage and stuffing, so as to relish at one sampling their composite appeal. Vegetables, it would seem, were less appreciated in those days than now, though doubtless Beau Brummell adopted an extremist's attitude when he answered a lady, who asked him if he never ate green vegetables, "Madame, I once ate a pea." Vegetables were served cold and without sauce—a disgusting trick—and the 'ever-popular potato' figured with every dish, bar the soup, sweets, and dessert.

"A perpetual thirst seemed to come over people," says Gronow, reminiscent, "both men and women, as soon as they had tasted their soup; as from that moment everybody was taking wine with everybody else till the close of dinner, and such wine as produced that class of cordiality which frequently wandered away into stupefaction."

An American of that day remarked that young Englishmen ' drank brandy like water.'

In those gross Gargantuan times the fashionable sports of boxing and driving four-in-hand, together with the necessity of going afoot, on horseback, or in a jolting coach when one had to travel, were potent aids to digestion, but even so the Englishman was believed, alike by the Swiss and French, to be more prone to suicide at this period than other people. As the conventions did not encourage ladies to drive coaches or lay out watchmen, they fell back upon medical science, and a pill box was as indispensable an adjunct of a great lady's toilet table as her pot of rouge. There was also a quaint little instrument, often found to-day in antique shops, and something resembling the one half of a pair of sugar tongs. I know an old lady whose grandmother used to employ the thing as regularly as her toothbrush. It was used for scraping from the human tongue its morning fur.

Such is the ' Old English ' cooking of the country publican's hazy tradition. But were one of our older Universities to endow a Chair of Historical Gastronomy, the learned professor could hardly fail to take exception to such very vague chronology. He calls for mead, let us say, but is informed that there is none in the cellar. He argues from internal evidence that the poet of Beowulf certainly drank mead. He maintains that King Alfred drank mead, and inquires whether these notabilities are either not old enough or not English enough to please the landlord. Landlord stares and possibly opens his mouth a little.

" Something not so old then," cries the Professor, " and yet characteristically English." He calls for mead no longer but demands in place of it the ' red wine of Gascoyne ' and the ' white of Alsace,' mentioning with thoughtful sadness that both these beverages were proffered the poet Lydgate,

who for ' lack of money ' might ' not speed ' and was unable in consequence to lay down what might have been a very pretty cellar. He demands Hippocras and Rhenish and all manner of ' subtleties ' in pastry, and strange made dishes concocted with all manner of conflicting ingredients. And he is appalled to think that the landlord who advertises his cooking as ' Old English ' has nothing in his house that might have appealed to Dick Whittington. And the landlord is furious. But the Professor is justified. For to mention only a few dishes, minnows, owls, hedgehogs, squirrels, whales' tails and grampus have all been deemed good for Englishmen at different periods, and not for those the least of quality. And the landlord of the ' Spotted Dog ' has only bread and cheese and a knuckle of ham, with roast beef now and again, and pickles. For his ' *Old* English ' is a younger growth by many centuries than the ' *Early* English,' say, of the architects.

' Old English ' songs would seem to be Elizabethan to Victorian. The collection which contains ' Come Lasses and Lads ' includes likewise, perhaps, ' Cease your Funning ' and ' Twickenham Ferry.'

' Old English ' dances, however, would seem to include anything English that is anterior to Jazz. The frequently revived Morris dance is, traditionally at least, associated with John of Gaunt, and supposed to have been introduced by his followers from Spain.

The expression ' Medieval,' no less than that of ' Old English,' is used by many people with astonishing laxity. An old gentleman once, at a performance of Mr Edward German's charming light opera ' Tom Jones,' confessed to me that he did not approve the ' medieval costumes.' How horrified Fielding would have been ! And the Eighteenth Century gentlemen, prior at least to the ' Castle of Otranto '

and the ' Rowley ' poems, had such a horror of everything Medieval and ' Gothic ' ! My Lord Chesterfield would have smiled—he would not have laughed, for he considered laughter vulgar—to hear himself and Gibbon and Horace Walpole and the elder Pitt practically lumped all together on the score of costume, with Guy of Warwick and the author of the ' Nut Brown Maid.'

I remember, too, a lady observing in a drawing-room that ' in the Middle Ages they used to hang people for stealing the merest trifles '—an accusation constantly reiterated but most ill-founded. The men of the Middle Ages frequently escaped with their lives, even when they had committed murder. The ' greenwood ' offered the escaped criminal a sanctuary which it is very far from offering him to-day. If he were retaken, of course, he would certainly be hanged, but it was odds he might never be retaken : there was always ' the sporting chance.' Or, again, a murderer might confess his crime and put himself formally under the protection of the Church. In this case he was ' offered a port ' ; that is to say, a sea-port was agreed upon, nearest to that locality in which he had submitted himself to the Ecclesiastical authorities, and to this port he must betake himself, garbed in penitential attire and bearing a cross, to submit himself to voluntary exile. He was given a space of three days in which to take himself off, and this sufficed, for a port was not chosen from which there was no outward traffic of ships for the Continent. But so long as the ruffian was kept waiting for his vessel to sail, once in the morning, once in the evening of each day of delay, he must walk into the water, up to his knees at least, to express by a touching symbolism his willingness to be gone. The proletariat doubtless derived more satisfaction from actually watching its murderers on the beach of a morning, got up in fancy dress,

than by merely seeing their photographs in the picture papers. The Middle Ages were not so free with the rope as was the eighteenth century. It is to the eighteenth century that we owe that anecdote of the judge rising wearily after a heavy luncheon and crying, "Well, gentlemen, I suppose we must hang some more of these damned scoundrels." The eighteenth century strung up the Reverend Doctor Dodd as cavalierly almost as 'Sixteen String Jack.' In Chaucer's days, magistrates were more circumspect. The felonious burglar was hanged, true, but not except in rare circumstances the mere pickpocket. The usual punishment for a cut-purse was not hanging but an hour in the pillory.

We do not see the past in proportion, and most of us have only the haziest notions respecting even the approximate times at which our great men lived and great events occurred. "You too, fair B—— S——," as Charles Lamb might possibly have expressed it, do you remember very positively informing me that your great-grandmother was known *personally* to Queen Elizabeth, and on my venturing to demur, reminding me that your kinswoman had lived to be ninety-four, as though *that* practically settled the matter? I never questioned your great-grandmother's high connections, but I ventured to suggest the dim possibility of this being a case of mistaken identity. It was at a late hour, perhaps, when the two personalities were brought acquainted.

And Mrs H—— F——, you. Do you remember showing me, as a 'Regency piece,' the coin of 1602, which you found in the old barn, and your suggestion that in the '*fourteenth century*' the 'Olde Cheshire Cheese' in Fleet Street had been a '*coaching inn*'? . . .

There is a delusion, at least in my opinion a delusion, widely popular with every class of people, which is that life in the past was altogether an easier affair than now, that

there was time for every one to do everything, and that 'hustle' was unknown. Even Praed, the poet, rises to this bait of the imagination and laments that, in comparison with the old slow going past,

"Our age allows
Scarce time to wipe our weary brows."

And Matthew Arnold likewise but voices the belief of the many when he speaks of the 'strange disease of modern life' with its 'sick hurry.' Surely the very names of the old coaches should suffice to convince us that, so early at least as the coaching days, *speed* was a desideratum. Think of them—the 'Flying Machine,' the 'Flying Wagon,' the 'Meteor,' the 'Telegraph,' the 'Alert,' the 'Tally-Ho,' the 'Wonder,' the 'Eclipse,' the 'Alacrity,' the 'Comet.' Yet how easy must it have been for our ancestors in their restful old way to have thought out names for their coaches more fully expressive of the temperament of the times. Why not, for example, the 'Laggard,' the 'Creeper,' the 'Crawler,' the 'Sluggard,' the 'Lounger,' the 'Doting Willie,' the 'Dreamer,' the 'Mooncalf,' or the 'Go Slow'? Such names would have looked to the full as pretty in gold lettering upon a ground of blue or white or scarlet, but—they would not have attracted passengers because, in those leisurely old times, people seem always to have been in such a devil of a hurry!

And before the days of coaches, in the Middle Ages proper, did life really allow of so much ease?

Chaucer the poet—did he have nothing beyond the composition of a series of masterpieces to occupy his time? That might have been enough in all conscience, but in point of fact we catch glimpses of him in a quite astonishing number of different posts and professions. He fought in France, was taken prisoner and ransomed. Two years in succession we

find him engaged upon secret service work in Flanders and elsewhere. He treated with France for peace. He treated likewise with that country on matters relating to the marriage of Richard II. He was thrice in Italy engaged upon diplomatic missions. He negotiated a commercial treaty with Genoa. Later we find him engaged as a custom-house official at the Port of London. He was returned to Parliament as Knight of the Shire for Kent. Ruined, as some maintain, by a rival political faction, he retreated to the Continent to live in exile, was stripped of his pensions but returned when the storm had expended its fury. He was made Clerk of the King's Works at Westminster. Was Chaucer less busy in the fourteenth century than Mr John Masefield or Sir Robert Bridges in the twentieth?

Was Cardinal Wolsey who

> "trod the ways of glory
> And sounded all the depths and shoals of honour,"

a man less busy than Mr Stanley Baldwin? A perusal of his life does not suggest it.

Did Samuel Pepys, the diarist, live less preoccupied by affairs than would an equally responsible official in the Admiralty of to-day? Pepys was boisterously fond of life, but that he owed to his peculiar temperament and, upon the whole, to his singularly robust constitution. With Pepys, though it was seldom a case of 'early to bed,' yet it frequently was one of 'early to rise.' Five and even four of a morning were no exceptional hours for him to be awakened, when called upon to cope with some especial rush of work. And he took his risk of catching the plague too, when that distemper was raging, journeying regularly to and fro between his house and office in manifest and hourly peril of his life.

I daresay the 'county town' of Georgian and Stuart days

was leisurely enough, but is it otherwise to-day? I remember spending five turgid months in a county town while convalescing after the war. Never shall I forget the deadly silence that used to settle upon the streets in winter after nine of the clock had struck. Long before ten, lights had vanished from every window. The inhabitants appeared to regard life as Kent viewed that portion of it which he was destined to pass with his feet in the stocks.

"Some time I shall sleep out; the rest I'll whistle."

There is still leisure. As many gentlemen doze after luncheon at their clubs as did—proportionately to their numbers—at those older coffee-houses. And as they did at that more legendary period when the King of Denmark would take himself off to slumber in his orchard, preferably no doubt while the Cabinet were sitting.

Some classes of the community manifestly enjoy more liberty to-day than ever fell to their lot a hundred to two hundred years ago. Factory employees, for example, are leisured men to-day as compared with their ancestors under the first two Georges. Shops have their fixed hour for closing of an evening, often a luncheon hour, and always an early closing day to the convenience of the staff and the inconvenience of the public. The domestic servant, who was a mere drudge even so late as the days of Dickens, is to-day as pampered as her mistress's Pekingese. Tradesmen in Dr Johnson's day, and even later, seem never to have thought of annual holidays but at most of occasional 'outings.' Mrs Gilpin had been married 'twice ten tedious years' before she inspired her lord and master with the happy idea of taking her to 'The Bell.' And even had he succeeded in assisting personally at the repast, how poor a substitute the most luxurious of banquets to the fortnight or three weeks

which Mr and Mrs Gilpin secure for themselves to-day, and during which they frequently transport themselves across the Channel. To take one's lady out to lunch, by way of relaxation from household affairs, but *once* in twenty years would seem to us to-day to be almost legitimate ground for divorce.

No, there was no more leisure ' in the past ' than now. The essential quality and stuff of life does not change. It is all of a piece. If I seem to labour this point unduly, let me admit that I have a very personal antipathy to this widespread and popular conception of the easy-going life of old. I was for a long period demonstrator at a museum exceptionally well-endowed with works of art from many periods. But never could I expatiate upon the elegance of craftsmanship, the dignity of conception, or indeed upon any quality whatsoever of the objects of whose grace I had been constituted the interpreter, without being confidentially informed by some philosophic old impostor—"Of course *they* could do that sort of thing *then*; [with profound contempt] they had *nothing* else to do." They . . . ! There were Greek, Roman, and Celtic relics. There were exhibits from the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, from the Renaissance and the seventeen-fifties. There was lace work from the early nineteenth—and one was asked to believe that all this work had been produced to kill time by people who had nothing else to do. It was a large conception.

But conceding, for the sake of argument solely, that the men of ' the past ' had ' nothing else to do,' which is almost as much to concede as that their buckets filled themselves at the well, that their costumes cut and sewed themselves together from raw material, and that their sheep and oxen, after first committing suicide, roasted themselves for the table, yet, granting all this—Did the contemporaries of

Chaucer paint masterly illuminations, and carve stone and hammer iron till it resembled foliage or lace work, *did* they compose poems, weave tapestries, *solely* out of sheer inveterate idleness and as a way of killing time? For if leisure produced the work of art, or if it were even the chief factor in producing it, those boarding-houses and small hotels of to-day which contain a floating population of people living upon small, but fixed and certain, incomes, would notoriously be hubs of intellect and shaping forges of the imagination, and bridge and cheap literature would be things unknown.

And now since I have committed myself to this jousting with popular historical misconceptions, let me consider yet one more. There is a widespread belief that the conditions of life in the Middle Ages were always excessively *simple*. I am not denying of course that modern life is complex, complex in the extreme; that would be ludicrous. I am merely suggesting that life in the past was not so absurdly simple as a really large number of people seem to imagine. A lady once told me that in the Middle Ages "If a man *could* do a thing he *did* it," and that the great cathedrals had just arisen because if a metal worker *could* produce wrought-iron gates, he just *did* produce them, and brought them along, and so with all the other crafts until—until, in a word, the cathedral was finished.

"And then," I cried, kindling with the lady's own enthusiasm, "they all dined together at the public expense. Those who *could* draw corks *drew* them, those——"

But she reminded me that we were "in a church and talking of serious things." I recall, too, an incident which befell me in 1914, when training on the coast, which supplies another example of this *simplicity* theory. We had attempted to advance in column from mass. The result was a

number of parties of active young men walking with great spirit in all directions and occasionally hurtling into and tumbling over each other, with expressions of deprecation or defiance.

"These things," observed the sergeant-major, "are sent to try us."

"All so much simpler in the Middle Ages," said a young Territorial Officer, as, later in mess, we were debating as to how the mistake arose.

"All simple then. No drill. No training. No damned tactics. You just roared: 'A murrain on the——!' and you charged!" This unexpected sally, which I took for a humorous extravagance and at which I laughed extremely, I discovered later to be, in truth, a serious expression of opinion.

A similar conception of the old art military was put forward, I remember, by Mr E. H. D. Sewell, a football enthusiast, with whom I once had the pleasure of tilting, courteously, in the hospitable columns of the *Pall Mall Gazette*.

"Our forbears," so he expressed himself, "never won a battle or a war by waiting and seeing what the other fellow was going to do. They hit him hard, and if he moved, hit him again, and then they did the talking."

Was it not precisely because the Spaniards of the Armada took a somewhat Sewellian view of naval warfare—employing foot-soldiers for boarding and striking in place of trained seamen and, above all, trained artillerymen—that they fell such hopeless victims to the scientific tactics and superior gunnery of the thinking and observant Drake, who hulled the unwieldy galleons almost at his pleasure and drowned their crews like rats?

But the Spaniards were soldiers rather than sailors.

There was no lack of forethought or science in the way they set to work to besiege those fated cities of the Netherlands. Every device of contemporary engineering was turned to account under such acknowledged masters of war as the ferocious Alva and Alexander Farnese and Don John of Austria. Those were the days of

> "Zealand's piteous moan,
> And Holland's torën hair."

There was no *Sewellism* about Spanish tactics when the Spaniards fought on land. These events and personalities belong to the Renaissance rather than to the Middle Ages. But if any one thinks that warfare at any period of the Middle Ages was simple and straightforward, let him give himself the trouble to examine at his leisure some one of those ancient castles which time has spared to us in a state approximating to completeness. One such I have in mind, the Castle of the Counts in Ghent. I have spent hours examining this old building and have come to the conclusion, which all I suppose arrive at who get to know it well, that it is a scientific engine of defence constructed with consummate ingenuity. With all deference to Mr Sewell, I would suggest that one, at least, of the uses to which a watch tower was put was that of seeing 'what the other fellow was going to do,' with a view to circumventing it.

Another belief which dies very hard is that burning at the stake was a common punishment throughout the Middle Ages. It is always the Middle Ages which serve for a scapegoat. Such punishments in Chaucer's day were rare indeed. You can read Riley from the year 1300 to the year 1400 and not come upon one single example of such a sentence being either pronounced or carried out. That fourteenth century indeed is an age of which England may be justly

proud. It was the day of heroic Lord Mayors who made a darling of the City; of Henry Picard—tactful host who once entertained five kings at one time to dinner, and smoothed over an awkward situation when one of the kings began to lose his temper at play afterwards; of Sir John Phelipot, who defeated a pirate fleet in the North Sea with his own merchant vessels, manned and equipped at his own expense; of the princely Whittington who endowed London, amongst other buildings, with a more airy and spacious Newgate in pity for the poor prisoners, that Whittington who is associated in nursery legends with his burning the bonds of Henry V., and with the cat and with the bright eyes of Alice Fitzwarren.

The fourteenth century gave us two of our noblest poets, both men who idolised the sentiment of pity, the creators of the 'Canterbury Tales' and of 'Sir Gawayne and the Green Knight.' It was an emancipated age, an age which had learnt not to tolerate tyranny but declared already for a limited monarchy. One of the charges levelled against Richard II. was that of putting himself above the law. Our museums are full of beautiful relics from this time, and it was then possible, as Monsieur Jusserand informs us, for a monk to improve his capacity as a sculptor by studying from the nude. The first great house was building, as though 'confident of the future,' without either moat or towers of defence. The arts flourished and the Madonnas were 'painted smiling.' This assuredly is not the 'Middle Ages' of the popular imagination.

It was not until Henry IV. gave the royal assent to the bill 'De Hæretico Comburendo' that the fires began to flame up at Smithfield, so that Chaucer was at the extreme limit of his age, if indeed he were still alive, when that Act received the royal assent. The teaching of Wycliffe had found dis-

ciples and prepared the way for the Reformation, when the clash of interests and ideals brought about by it provoked men to the extremes which made such atrocities possible. But the monarchs rather to be associated with such horrors are Mary of England, Francis I. of France, and Charles V. and Philip of Spain, than the contemporaries, crowned or otherwise, of the laughter-loving Chaucer. On the other hand, to attribute the blame for the religious persecution of the Renaissance—as some apologists have attempted to do—to the influence of Machiavelli is childish, seeing that after all there was nothing very novel in this way of going to work, and we can hardly attribute to the author of 'The Prince' the methods employed in extorting from the Templars the confessions which it was deemed convenient they should make.

Another notion which has no basis in fact to support it is that the neo-paganism of the Renaissance dissolved, in some mysterious way, the 'unity of Christian Europe.' Of course there never was any such unity, or how came Cœur de Lion in the Duke of Austria's dungeon when Blondel played beneath his window? In what was this unity shown? Ill-feeling between the French and Germans was as marked in the fifteenth century as it is to-day, as is abundantly manifest from the delightful journal of the monk Felix Faber. Was this European unity exemplified, perhaps, in the activities of Jack Cade, the 'Jacquerie,' Wat Tyler, in the raids between ports; in the fact that every merchantman put forth from port armed as though for war? Was it in evidence at Courtrai or at Cassel? Did that blossom blow more brightly before or after the Hundred Years' War? This European unity which the Renaissance dissolved is a unity which never existed.

Superstitions . . . superstitions . . . Let us proceed, as the

judge said, to ' hang a few more of these damned scoundrels,' even though their friends and supporters rise to protest that they are no criminals but very honest men.

There is a prevalent belief that the Middle Ages was the great era of witchcraft. I suspect this opinion of being an indirect legacy from such wonder-loving writers as Mallory and Marco Polo and Sir John Mandeville. But to judge of Middle English society from these enchanting romancers is like gauging the tone of the Court of Queen Victoria by the standard of Swinburne's ' Poems and Ballads.' Witch cases in Chaucer's day were not only rare, but very seldom, it would seem, taken quite seriously. An example presents itself in the case of Roger Clark of Wandsworth, who, in the year 1382, attempted to cure Joanna atte Hacche of a fever of which that lady was then lying sick in her house in Ironmonger Lane, City. The preposterous Roger tied about his patient's neck a fragment of parchment, neatly done up in a piece of cloth-of-gold, and pocketed his fee—twelve pence. The husband sat down to observe the effects of magic upon his Joanna, but the charm was a miserable charm, ' in no way did it profit her.'

The case came on before the Lord Mayor's Court in the Guildhall. The defendant was asked what the words were of this charm of his. He replied that it contained a Latin prayer which he proceeded to quote. The parchment was then examined, but proved to contain no single word of the prayer just recited. The sorcerer was an illiterate sorcerer and the whole affair a piece of bluff. The Lord Mayor informed the impostor that "a straw beneath your foot would be of just as much avail for fevers as this said charm of yours is." Now rogues who were prepared to swear false witness usually signified the same by tucking a straw into the shoe—if taxed with the fact they could always swear it had come

there by accident—so here we have an extremely early example of a 'joke from the Bench.' So the culprit is told that his charm is not worth a straw, and what answer does he make? "He fully granted that it would be so." He was sentenced to be led through the midst of the City riding barebacked and towards the tail of the horse, with a whetstone—symbol of a liar—tied about his neck, and the charm and . . . and . . . certain intimate emblems of the physician's craft. Pipers and trumpeters were to proceed, playing before him. From these proceedings—half cynical, half jocular—could any one have prophesied that frenzy of witch persecution which was to sweep England (and for that matter the Continent also) in the time of James I.?

Roger Clark, called in perhaps at the suggestion of Joanna, was not long taken seriously by the gentleman who paid him his twelve pence. The Lord Mayor never began to take him seriously, he did not take himself seriously, and it is hardly to be supposed that the mob took him seriously when, hung with his rococo adornments, he formed the *pièce de résistance* in that hilarious penitential procession.

In Jacobean times the Roger Clarks were drowned by the mob, or bullied, starved, and tortured into confessions and then hanged, if no worse. Chaucer's men, in this particular, were more civilised. An hour in the pillory with the instruments of his jugglery hanging from his neck was the usual punishment which awaited the detected trafficker in art magic. It remained for James I.'s government to appoint a Witchfinder General in the person of Matthew Hopkins, a civil servant who would have filled with amazement the author of the 'Canterbury Tales.' It is good to record that the barbarous and bigoted Matthew, when in the full tide of his career, was himself accused of witchcraft, flung into a

pond, and thereafter hanged for failing to pass his own too stringent tests. History offers few finer examples of poetic irony than this.

Poor James! His slovenliness, his drunkenness, his cruelty, his cowardice, his Scotch accent, and his queer antipathy alike to the charms of witches and tobacco, have lost him all credit with his posterity. And yet the 'Elizabethan Age' is as much his as it is the Virgin Queen's. Some of the noblest of the Shakespearean plays are Jacobean in date, and James was the patron of Ben Jonson, most of whose Masques, those enchanting pieces of exquisite fancy, delightful sprightliness, and classic elegance, were performed at Court before James I., their stage-settings being contrived by yet another man of genius, the architect, Inigo Jones.

The witch mania was but one of those waves of hysteria which sometimes pass over communities as they do over individuals. Something of the sort was witnessed during the Great War, when an insignificant body, the 'conscientious objectors,' numerically negligible, and anxious to be made use of anywhere except upon the field, were treated alike by press and people with a degree of virulence and rancour which could hardly have been exceeded had every member of their community been kith and kin to Guido Fawkes.

One cause of much popular misconception of history I have yet to touch upon. There are a sort of cheap-jack romance writers who have long since discovered that it is financially profitable to flatter the present day at the expense of all preceding times. People whom their novels and plays delight are little given to critical analysis, and they respond to this treatment as does the proverbial trout to tickling. I could mention titles (but it would be invidious) of plays and romances, the whole appeal of which lies in the applied assumption that modern man is a creature of transcendent

excellence when contrasted with his benighted ancestors of the 'Dark Ages.' Such writers say in effect, "What fools your ancestors appear, my dear sir, in contrast with your most enlightened self!" A gentleman whose acquaintance I made in the lounge of a Swiss hotel gave me an account, and with considerable gusto, of a play he had seen filmed, from which I cull a typical example of the type of thing I have in mind. A modern young man, all complete with Ford car, finds himself transported back into the 'Middle Ages.' He becomes entangled in some dispute with a party of mounted knights, all of course, according to recipe, in complete armour. This highly practical young gentleman brings numbers of them to the ground and drives gaily off in the Ford, dragging one after him with a lasso. It was all very droll, I gathered, and everybody had laughed consumedly. Really one might almost believe that scenario writers imagine that the men of the Middle Ages *habitually* wore armour even during peace time. Perhaps if our posterity continue to rejoice in films they will represent our modern young officers paying afternoon calls in Mayfair wearing 'tin hats,' service boots, and gas masks. But humour, as distinct from whimsicality or mere clowning, derives immediately from an intimate sense of the realities of life. Judged from this standpoint, Charles Lamb's 'Mrs Battle,' or the Captain of 'The Old Margate Hoy,' or 'Weller Senior' are the creations of humorists in a sense in which Sir W. S. Gilbert's milkmaid 'Patience,' for example, is most emphatically not.

Let us consider what might actually have befallen our young gentleman in his Ford car if by some incalculable chance he had been set down upon the road to Canterbury when the Pilgrims were passing. The Ford car, never adapted for the 'slough' of a medieval road and heavier, for its size,

than any other vehicle upon that road, sinks rapidly to its hubs and sticks, and so much for the Ford car. The Knight, a courteous and travelled man, advances and proffers his assistance in pure London English. The accent, however, is foreign to our young adventurer from the twentieth century, and it goes without saying that he has read not a word of Chaucer, of Langland, of Lydgate, of the poet of 'Gawayne,' of Mallory, or of Wycliffe. He has been to a great Public School, and so the literature of his country is a closed book to him. True, he remembers 'doing Hamlet,' for one hour once a week, one very hot summer term. He recalls the form master's shameless foraging in Verity's notes and the damnable iteration of his mournfully-bellowed "Metaphor from bowls! Metaphor from bowls!" But then English literature was not regarded as a serious subject —why, it was like French! The form master had taken no degree in English, knew nothing of English, and cared less. Against Shakespeare he was believed to nourish sentiments of personal hostility on the grounds of his oft-repeated assertion that "when *he*"—the form master—"went to the theatre, he went to enjoy himself." This was understood to mean 'revue.' In this vendetta between the form master and the poet, the Bard of Avon was invariably the loser, and the atmosphere of gloom which his exponent and interpreter contrived to create out of a meticulously expurgated copy of 'Twelfth Night' was worthy the ante-chamber of an aspiring dentist.

The Knight is still talking, eloquently, persuasively, but the recollection of the form master's "Metaphor from bowls!" does not help the luckless youth in his unenviable predicament. The Knight, perceiving that his words so far have tended rather to confuse and puzzle than to reassure the young man, changes his plan and addresses him this time

in French, the language of Society and of the English Kings. But—*French!* Our young gentleman had been brought up at a great Public School! The French he had acquired *there* was *not* the French of 'Stratford-atte-Bow,' neither was it 'French from the farthest end of Norfolk,' both of which were living dialects spoken by living people. No, it was just Public School French. You didn't speak it in the school, because, of course, you didn't need to, and you couldn't have outside, because, of course, nobody would have understood you. Another disadvantage of 'Public School French' was that it prevented you learning real French afterwards, because once you had learnt 'Public School French,' it wasn't easy to forget it, and the vowel sounds were so queer.

The Knight is obviously taken aback. Here is a young fellow, English to judge by features and complexion, who appears to speak *no* language. And the strange cut of his garments, too, and the odd drab colour! And the vehicle—what is it? What country did it come from? In all his travels the Knight has never looked upon the like. The *horses* have doubtless been stolen but, before they *were* stolen, what had happened to the *shafts* or the *pole*? The Knight is too well bred however to let his astonishment appear in his looks. He beckons to the Monk. "My dear fellow," he says in effect, "you talk better Latin than I. What I did learn when young I have so forgotten that I can scarcely claim any longer to be 'literatus.' See if *you* can make it clear to this extraordinary young oddity, who seems to have had a breakdown, that we should like to be of service to him if we can. As he neither understands English nor French, I can only conclude that he is a foreigner, but what his country may be I cannot even so much as guess at! I have never seen such clothes in all my travels. Talk to him, my dear friend; if he doesn't understand your Latin either, we may fairly assume that he is deaf and

dumb. I don't think he can be a lunatic, his eyes focus you well enough, he looks as though he were trying to concentrate upon what is being said to him but—however, *you* try."

So the Monk tries, and he is no more successful than the Knight. Latin! The great Public School and the Preparatory between them had spent ten years of this young man's life in teaching him Latin. It had given him a knowledge of Latin as extensive and peculiar as Mr Weller's knowledge of London. The young man could have compiled a guide to the linguistic eccentricities of the Latin language. Hundreds of irregular verbs could he conjugate, though, if truth be told, he was a trifle less certain about the regular ones. He could have declined 'Jusjurandum' or 'Bos Bovis' with any grammarian of Ancient Rome. He had even contracted a very slight acquaintance with Vergil and Ovid, whose works afford so many interesting sidelights upon Kennedy's 'Latin Grammar.' More, he had himself translated all the tenderer flights of Mrs Hemans into Latin verse. It was called 'Verse,' not 'Poetry,' because the principles upon which such compositions were based were drawn rather from science than from art. The 'quantities' had 'to be right,' but there was no talk of 'emotional appeal' or any such nonsense, and if the word for a violet did not scan while the word for a cauliflower did, why, you chose the latter. But the whole game of Public School Latin—like that of Public School French—was played according to the rules. It was just a traditional genteel accomplishment, but it was clearly understood upon all sides that it was dead, stone dead, and as the vulgar have it, 'dead as mutton.' Dead it had been through countless ages. Dead it always would be, and, like most dead things, it was not—to a healthy mind, that is—particularly interesting or pleasing. And here was a fellow *talking* it! It was like a nightmare.

The Monk regards the young man sternly. The young man blushes and has the grace to reflect: "Oh! had I been set to study tombstones instead of going to the great Public School, I should at least have had the benefit of the open air!"

Monk and Knight do their best now to explain by the language of signs that if they can manage to send him along a relief party with oxen and wagon ropes, they will, and the cavalcade of Pilgrims set forward once more. The Ford car has by this time settled yet more deeply into the ooze of this unrepaired road, and it looks as though pick and shovel may be required, as well as draught beasts and a rope, if it is ever to be extricated. Miller, reeve, and cook venture upon a few verbal pleasantries, for they have been badly brought up, but the modern young gentleman's feelings are not hurt because he cannot make out what they are saying. To cover his deficiencies of vocabulary he raises his cap, a gesture which provokes a roar of laughter. He sees one old dame, however, who looks at him sympathetically. She wears a broad brimmed hat and an odd sort of divided skirt which puts him in mind of Zouave breeches worn at a fancy-dress ball. Her colour is a thought too high, she is too buxom, too healthy looking altogether. She is the type of woman whom the young man's sisters would pronounce as 'bad style.' But his sisters are not here, and the 'Wife of Bath' looks *human* he thinks at any rate, not like that last crew of hooligans who are still obviously mocking him amongst themselves. The 'Wife of Bath' turns her horse's head a trifle towards him and gives him as she passes a token no example of which is to be met with in our museums, because no professor has as yet succeeded in permanently fixing its lustre. The young fellow calls it the 'glad eye.' This does not however help him to arrive at any notion as to the period

of time into which the capricious Fates have so disconcertingly propelled him. The History of England he had studied, of course, at the great Public School. It was a phantasmagoria in which men with queer names were always fighting. There was plenty of battle, murder, and sudden death, with now and again a treaty thrown in for a make-weight, or a royal marriage. But nobody is fighting, or ratifying a treaty, or taking unto himself a royal bride this morning upon the road to Canterbury. A terrible loneliness invades the young man's soul as the Pilgrims pass out of sight beyond a bend in the road and he finds himself once more alone. He admired, despite his unhappy plight, the gorgeous medley of colours which these costumes presented, the imaginative simplicity of design. That brown faced archer with the green belt and peacock feathered arrows, like a sort of Robin Hood, he thinks, and the young fellow who came up with the gentleman who first spoke to him, with the white and red flowers embroidered and the long sleeves—"Might belong to some Sports Club, perhaps?" It was brilliant all of it as the Russian ballet, yet somehow English, somehow homespun. Let him see, *costume*—that might give him a clue to the date. . . . Hadn't he learned anything about *costume* at school—how his ancestors used to dress? Let him see, yes, something. . . . Didn't they play cricket in top hats in the *very* old times? And the Ancient Britons, of course! Here, at least, he was on terra firma. They went naked in the summer (bad form), and painted themselves blue (mad). In the winter they turned over a new leaf, dropped all that rotten self-advertisement and Bohemianism, and wore furs (like motorists).

But the relief party of oxen and sturdy peasants is coming into view, and so far our young fellow from the twentieth century has not appeared like some demi-god from Olympus,

or triumphed at all noticeably over those simple savages, his ancestors of the 'Dark Ages.'

The plea for the Public Schools seems to be that they create the 'sporting spirit.' It is generally conceded that the education is poor in quality. A well-known publicist put the matter thus: "the Public Schools do not educate, thank Heaven, but they produce chivalrous gentlemen!" As against this it is as well to remind ourselves that the words 'chivalrous' and 'gentleman' come down to us from those dark ages before the Public School system was devised, and before one brick of the Public Schools, as we know them, was standing upon another. How then were these 'chivalrous gentlemen' produced? Presumably by some other system. And there were rather a number of them, too, when one comes to think of it! There was Bayard, and Chandos, and Du Guesclin. And there was the Black Prince and his father, and there was King Stephen. King Stephen, in fact, would appear to have been so excessively chivalrous that a business man of to-day would perhaps feel inclined to regard him as quite three-quarters fool. And there was Guy of Warwick, not the legendary Guy, but he of whom the Emperor Sigismund declared that "Were all the virtues to perish from the earth, they might be re-created from the pattern of that one man."

I am not contesting the claim of the Public Schools to produce 'chivalrous gentlemen'; I am only recalling the fact that we already had these 'chivalrous gentlemen' before we had the Public Schools. We had the finished product in quantity before ever we built those factories which now claim to be indispensably necessary to its production.

Manly sports to-day are encouraged—so were they throughout the Middle Ages. But as regards education in its broader aspects—Is the average product of our Public

Schools better or worse educated than was the same type of young man in Chaucer's London? The question would make a good subject for a thesis. And these reflections arising naturally out of my subject are by no means irrelevant in a book which has to deal with our Cockney ancestors.

That 'we know too much nowadays,' that 'life was perhaps happier when people were more superstitious,' is a plaint which I remember often to have heard, but chiefly as a boy, and uttered by very old people. Is that complaint still current? I feel sure it must be. A sentiment which was but recently so widespread can hardly have ceased utterly to exist. The Victorians may be pardoned for not foreseeing that their achievements in the realms of physical science, all those engines which they constructed or prepared the way for later inventors to construct, and which they were fain to regard as symbols of the rapid progress of all life towards perfection, were instruments capable of being used to demolish no less than to construct. The epoch of industry still runs its course, but science has ceased to be a fetish. We have seen the marvellous discovery of electricity employed by the Americans for the degrading purpose of exterminating their criminals. There have been immense developments in the science and theory of gunnery. The aeroplane is a fact, so, too, is the submarine, and poison gas. Surgery likewise progresses; we improve at repairing those we have maimed. What the Victorians were chiefly developing with all that 'high seriousness' of theirs was the power to kill. Every age has its dream and they had theirs. At last came the ruin and the awakening which George Gissing had prophesied in 'The Private Papers of Henry Ryecroft.' The plains of Flanders supplied the over-ventilated lecture theatre, and the Kaiser the too demonstrative professor, who exposed

to a world weary of his rhapsodies, the fallacies of the Victorian creed of materialism, and the more obvious sophistries implicit in the cult of the machine.

The fallacy of supposing the Middle Ages to be unduly preoccupied with witchcraft I have already touched upon. I have not so far glanced at the occultism—same thing—of our own day. And a curious page it will make when our history comes to be written. We laugh when Bacon informs us that the Duchess of Burgundy caused the ghosts of the two princes murdered in the Tower to walk nightly before her old enemy, that cold Henry VII., who had profited so mightily by their demise. We have no faith in the 'curious arts' of that understanding and most vindictive old lady. We are justified in our sceptical attitude, but *only* if we are equally sceptical about the 'psychic phenomena' of the present day. If we do place faith in the 'manifestations' produced through the agency of the modern 'unpaid medium,' it is obviously illogical to regard all such phenomena of the past as 'delusion,' 'superstition,' or 'monkish imposture.' Let it be all true, or all false, or let there be, in both cases, just that groat's worth of truth in the million of folly for which the average man appears prepared to go bail. Life is all of a piece. It is not one thing to-day and something totally different after next Tuesday week. It is absurd to postulate any sudden cleavage between present and past. But so far from our having any right to laugh at King James and his witches, I am not sure that he would not rather be in his right if—upon his 'psychic plane,' or wherever he is—he were to laugh at *us*. Look at this which I culled from a newspaper this morning—17th October 1926 :—

"For close upon an hour the white-clad figure of a woman—the figure of the traditional ghost with its flowing draperies—walked about a tiny room close to Westminster Abbey. Her footsteps made no

sound, her face was like a mask of wax that has not been allowed to set properly, and at times she appeared to float upon the air with no visible means of volition."

From the same rich mine I learn that at Wilkesbarre, Pennsylvania, the 'Domestic Relations Court' has before it a case in which a husband is resisting his wife's claim to support on the ground that she conducts a 'love school' in their home. He alleges that she administers new love potions to her pupils. Counsel for the defence declared that she conducted classes where women, some of whom were married, took love powders, made from the eyes of sheep, to enhance their charms.

'Eye of newt,' in fact, and 'toe of frog.'

I wonder if any witch in King James I.'s time was followed round a kitchen by a pudding? This happened in the North of England some few months back, *teste* the Press.

But King James did not *encourage* his witches, nor love nor cherish them. There were no fortunes to be made at that game then. 'Look now upon this picture—and on this.'

The old crone of Jacobean days stands at the door of her mud-floored, tumble-down hovel, with its roof of reeds all in holes. Her black cat rubs itself against her legs, a creature savage and starving as herself, and firmly believed by the villagers to be a familiar spirit which sucks her blood. Behind the door is that redoubtable birch broom on which it is believed she can fly. She stands there quaking and anathematising the villagery, who curse her roundly in the unvarnished idiom of the proletariat. She is blear-eyed, hare-lipped, palsied, muttering, part idiot, part medium, part blackmailing old blackguard, and sometimes poisoner. For she cannot live always upon the grudging alms of

affrighted peasants, nor upon stolen turnips, and cannot afford always, for ready money, to turn her back upon such dirty jobs as may occasionally be thrust upon her by the revengeful or ambitious. She is a convenient scapegoat, for no juryman will ever believe her innocent or trust her evidence. From time to time she is savagely cudgelled and is commonly 'not quite right in the head.' But—

Would a resuscitated King James recognise for a witch this fashionably slender, modern gentlewoman, modishly attired and manicured, who with all the grace of the most perfect self-possession, advances to meet him across the seamless Axminster of the prettily decorated London flat? She places the crystal upon the table and motions him to be seated. He studies her curiously. There is nothing strange about her except the 'Eton crop,' and this he charitably attributes to the effects of a disease.

"Did you ever see a fairy's funeral, Madame?" inquired the poet Blake upon one of his few visits amongst really conventional people.

"No," the modern hostess might reply, "but of course I have seen the photographs of fairies. *So* interesting. I understand that they have become rather blasé through giving so many sittings."

The old order changeth giving place to—the old order disguised as new. The craze for mascots, universal throughout Europe, is medieval *and* modern. No jeweller's shop, no toyshop is without them, and since no one believes in such things nowadays, it seems odd that they should pay money for them, for money was never harder to acquire than now.

Our silly season, with its wolves who suckle children, its sea-serpents and giant gooseberries, are no whit less foolish than the prodigies recounted by the Eliza-

bethan popular rhyme-sheets. "Plus ça change," and so forth.

Am I then what is called a 'deteriorationist'? Do I view the men of the past as beings of another kind than ourselves? I most certainly do not. I am content with this twentieth century of ours; I think, in love with it. I assuredly would not change it for another.

Do I believe then that we of to-day are superior to our ancestors? Are we 'finer clay,' possessed of more generous instincts, living to nobler issues? Neither the one nor the other.

Recorded history (the written word, I mean, as opposed to the deductions of geologists) reveals changes certainly, but none which are either psychological or psychic. Did Edward II. in Berkeley Castle, or Richard II. in the Tower, feel differently because it was the 'Middle Ages' from the Russian aristocrats of yesterday penned within their dungeons by the Bolsheviks? That is surely unbelievable. They were unhappy gentlemen first and last, haunted these as those by the identical nightmare, the apprehension of foul play, a nightmare from which it was decreed that only death should deliver them.

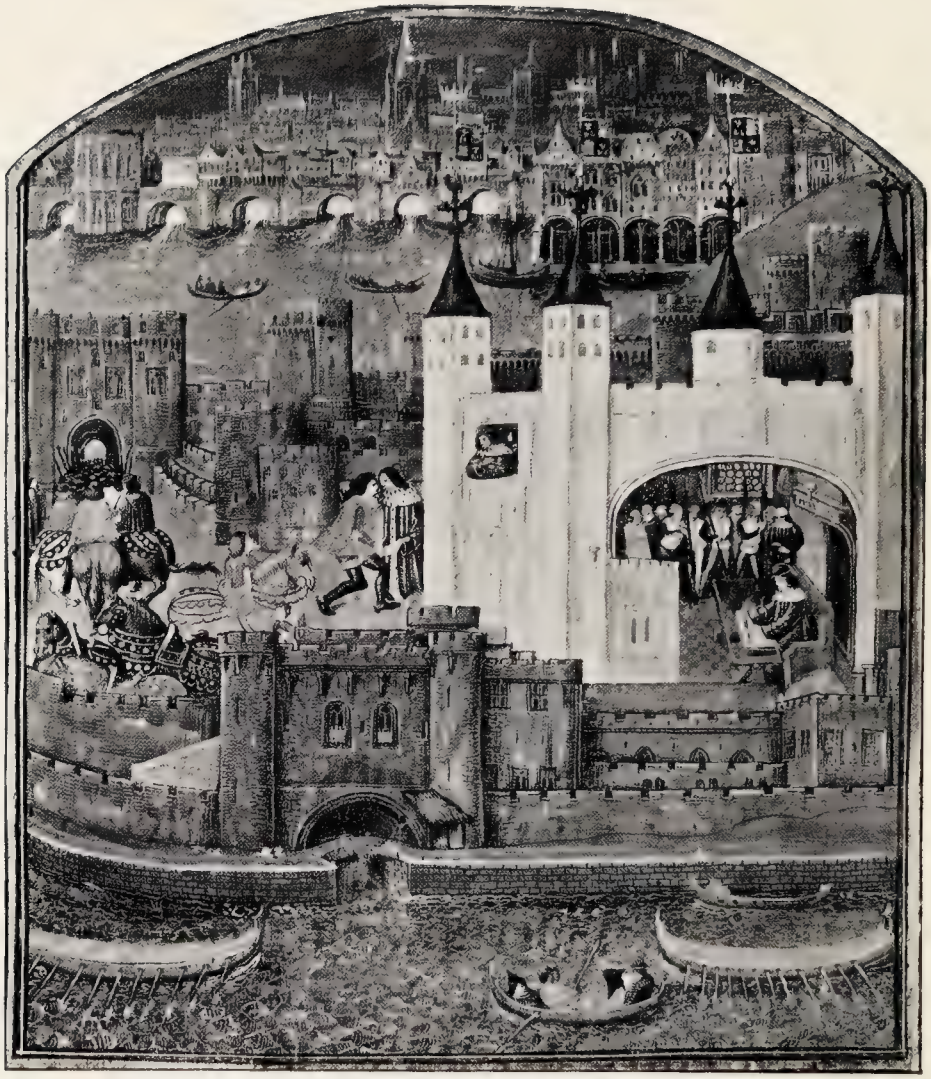
And the archer of Henry V.—rain-sodden, underslept, scorbutic, watching, watching, while the camp-fires of the French grow pallid in the dawn—did *he* feel differently, because it was the 'Middle Ages,' from the rifleman before Ypres so similarly circumstanced, awaiting in his trench about 'The Salient' the German advance?

Both alike were 'men, mortal men,' as Falstaff has phrased it, with one of those flashes of pity which give his character a touch of the sublime—men heroic in their helplessness, at grips with Destiny and thinking 'long, long thoughts.'

The human soul by which we live is the everlasting basis of all humanity. By means of this we gauge the past; by means of this the future will gauge us. This does not transmute with the shifting seasons, nor change with epochs or with cycles. It is not subject to change. It endures. It is rock of adamant.

# CHAPTER II

## A Holiday in Chaucer's London



THE EARLIEST VIEW OF LONDON, SHOWING THE TOWER,
OLD LONDON BRIDGE, AND THE CITY BEYOND

(*From an illuminated manuscript, "Poesies de Charles, Duc d'Orleans," in the British Museum*)

## *A Holiday in Chaucer's London*

MY FRIEND who had been dozing over a copy of the 'Canterbury Tales' had now quite definitely fallen asleep. By an abrupt movement I awakened him. He opened his eyes wonderingly, then sat bolt upright and stared incredulously at the gas-stove.

"I was in Chaucer's London," he observed.

"You dreamed it, then, for you have never left your chair."

"How long have I been asleep?"

"Five minutes," I answered, "or perhaps not quite so long."

"I could have sworn I spent a whole day there!"

"Tell me," I said.

* * * * *

I found myself, he answered, lying quite innocent of night attire in a very strange old bed, in an even stranger bedroom, in the Tabard Inn. The first rustle of dawn stirred at my windows. The first blackbird roused himself somewhere outside in the bushes, and fluted drowsily to his fellows. The shadows of night had melted, and the grey haze of a midsummer dawn was yielding to that tender translucent mist of rose and gold which the sun's magic would soon transfigure into the intense blue of open day.

In the ordinary course of things I should have fallen asleep again, but curiosity kept me waking. My bed was a

carved four-poster. My counterpane was of ray, a fabric much in request for its gay, bright stripes. I had several pillows, three or four I think, and from a rent in one of the cases little white feathers were protruding, dove's feathers as I later discovered, and carefully selected. London was full of the loot from the French wars and this bed had been secured by some English captain from a castle in France. But the captain had either miscalculated its dimensions or retained but a hazy recollection of those of his own bedchamber in his diminutive two-storied dwelling-house in Fleet Street, the suburb of London which he affected.

The bed was a superb trophy there was no denying, but it was also a white elephant, and as such it was at last disposed of and secured after sundry intermediate adventures by Harry Bailey, a 'merrie man,' a member of parliament and the present landlord of the 'Tabard.' The floor of my bedchamber was strewn with clean rushes upon a stratum of rushes which I suspected to be less clean and not wholly innocent of fleas. A dog—my 'Spot' apparently, carried back with me through time—had been put into my room to share the apartment with his master. He took the change quite as a matter of course, rose from his bed upon a piece of cloth and stretched himself. I was glad of his society. He took from the strangeness of my surroundings.

My lattice windows were of glass—for my 'Tabard' was a palace among hotels and scorned the glassless lattices of oak which did duty for windows with hostelries of the meaner sort—and the panes were those little 'diamond panes,' which one sees to-day revived sometimes for picturesque effect. It was greyer though and less translucent than the glass of the twentieth century. I called to mind that the trade to London from Venice was in sugar, perfumes, spices, silks, and *glass*, and that glass was still a fabulously

expensive commodity. I thought of how the poets loved to apply to it such epithets as suggested luxury :—

> 'In her oriel there she was
> Closèd round with royal glass.'

Nay, they would go farther and compare their mistress' eyes to glass, as though it were some actual jewel. Times change, glass grows cheap, and to-day, unless the lady be smitten with an academic fondness for the antique, we are likely to offend if we tell her that she has 'a glass eye.'

The lattices were fast shut but the bedchamber was larger than I should have supposed, and with better ventilation, would be airy enough.

England was already renowned for its good inns, and I amused myself by thinking out all sorts of analogies between this 'Tabard' and the Ritz of my own day. But better acquaintance was to prove them all defective, for at what good modern hotel could I see that striking mixture of all classes which I was to behold at the 'Tabard'? Society was more fluid, life under certain aspects richer. Rich and poor mix more freely. Perhaps the old feudal habit of dining in hall, the noble and his family and the retainers all together separated only by a salt cellar, may have had something to do with creating this unembarrassed atmosphere. Another cause might be the custom obtaining amongst travellers of banding themselves together into companies for greater security upon the road. The great man, in this London of Chaucer, might be haughty but he was not exclusive, and Londoner and provincial, knight, cook, monk, and miller, might ride from London to Canterbury and back again, and prove in the event no very incongruous or ill-assorted company. But the growing luxury and refinement of the times was already sapping this superficial 'clannishness' and

patriarchal simplicity, and the age following Chaucer's was to betray a marked cleavage between class and class. The great man will no longer dine in his hall amongst his people, but alone with his lady and his children in 'a little chamber with a chimney,' and many will be the tenants' complaints as to the landlord's inaccessibility, and many the grievances which a few moments of after-dinner conversation in the older fashioned style, without ceremony or intermediaries, would have served to redress.

As I lay in bed pondering upon these things, the clock of St Margaret's in Southwark High Street struck half after four, half after four of a morning in early May. The grey daylight was already creeping through my windows, revealing more fully the forms and colours of things. I fell to examining the walls of my bedchamber. They were decorated with one of those crude but gay frescoes which the elegance of the day was everywhere tending to supplant by tapestry. The wall beyond my bed-foot displayed a castle, in the keep of which a young fellow with curling yellow locks was apparently proposing marriage to a lady, from the peak of whose sugar-loaf hat fell a quantity of coloured streamers. Such hats the ladies of the old Court of King Edward II. had made popular, but they were now passed from the mode. The illustrators of the modern nursery books yet keep the tradition of such head-gear alive—in fact it is difficult to conceive of the 'fair lady upon a white horse' setting forward to her tryst at Banbury otherwise attired. At the foot of the turret wherein this gallant couple were stationed, a posy in black letter, which I amused myself by roughly modernising, gave the clue to the allegory :—

'Where doth Youth his lodging take ?
Ask of them that verses make,

With Delight he is this hour,
And both dwell within one tower.'

A tap at the door (my friend continues) prepared me for fresh surprises. A young gentleman presented himself who turned out to be my Squire of the Body, and he had looked in, so it appeared, to valet me—*and* he wore tights! Yes, tights of white satin which merged into ermine some few inches below the knee. His shoes of soft-tooled leather, pliable as modern bedroom slippers, had each a distinct peak and upward curl at the toe. His tunic, which fitted closely to the skin, and was embroidered at pleasantly irregular intervals with red and white flowers, had long red-lined green sleeves, so long in fact that their hanging points swept almost to the ground. He placed his hat upon the 'hutch'—that large oak chest at my bed-foot, which performed but indifferently the office of combined wardrobe and chest of drawers. His hat he had been carefully nursing. It was tall or taller than a modern silk hat, but quite rimless and much fuller at the top. It was made of some light blue material and embroidered in the middle of the front with a device in needlework which represented the moon in a coronal of little stars. Did I tell you that his hair was yellow, curling, and—as the girls put it—'bobbed'? He was an odd apparition, and there he stood awaiting orders.

When I had sufficiently recovered my astonishment, I asked him—I don't remember quite in what form of words—what chances there might be of my being able to procure a bath.

"Nothing simpler," he made answer, "the well-to-do of King Richard's reign bathe at least as much as the same class will under Queen Victoria. But—hot water." And he hurried off. How this Plantagenet Squire had come to hear of Queen Victoria I did not trouble myself to inquire. One

accepts much in a dream, and one does not subject it to analysis. But I did suspect the truth of his generalisations with regard to bathing. "As much bathing——" what had he said, "in Chaucer's day as in Queen Victoria's"? Something very like that at all events. Preposterous . . . and yet . . . I brought to mind the strange places in which the bath is situated in the true Victorian house modernised. Partitioned off from the landing on the stairs, or jockeyed into some alcove that was intended to serve for scenic background to an aspidistra. That bathroom was no integral portion of the structure of the house. Victorian novelists, what light did they throw on the matter? I recollected that ten minutes sufficed Mr Pickwick for his toilet upon the occasion of his famous visit to Dingley Dell, upon that alarming occasion when they all went rook shooting in the afternoon and Mr Winkle was so unfortunate as to wing Mr Tupman. But that other occasion then, when he visited old Wardle for Christmas? "Water in the basin's a mask o' ice," Sam had told him. He made no reference to the bath at all. My faith was shaken. My train of thought was broken by the reappearance of my valet in the tights, propelling before him a portable bath, whose shape and appearance put me strongly in mind of a miniature pulpit. He was preparing to depart once more in quest of hot water when I contrived to get him talking again, and managed to elicit some few more facts which helped me more clearly to understand the relation in which we stood to one another. That I was a knight no doubt appeared to exist. My friend in the tights *was* my Squire of the Body. My guess had been correct, then. He was a young fellow of good family, and an aspirant to knighthood, and I gathered from his answers that he considered no office menial that was undertaken about the person of a knight, if such office tended, however indirectly,

towards the advancement of chivalry. This was all as good as could be. I was a knight and he was my squire, and I felt grateful to my good luck and to a code of etiquette which subjected him rather than myself to the necessity of fetching and carrying. So I let him depart once more and he returned with several curiously shaped pots made of barrel-staves hooped in with iron. He filled the bath, and from a hook in one of the rafters overhead which had escaped my notice, he hung a mighty bouquet of sweet-smelling herbs, mint, thyme, rosemary and the like, which yielded a delicious perfume in the steam arising from the hot water.

"The herbs are said to be restorative, Sir, like the twentieth century bath ammonia."

I was now free (declared my friend) to soak in the hot water, a luxury I had been far from anticipating. The bath over, I sat, partly clothed, upon my 'hutch' to be shaved. After the shave, an emollient of warm rose-water. Admirable! My hair was now combed with an ivory comb, "courteously and jollily," as my Squire expressed it, quoting, he tells me, the "Romaunt of the Rose." Nor was that all, for my poetical valet—did I tell you that his accomplishments included sketching, song writing, flute playing, and dancing?—sought out hot tongs, and despite my vigorous protests proceeded to curl my hair! He had previously spread a little foot mat upon the rushes for me to stand upon while being dressed. My costume is not unlike my Squire's, except that as he has elected to wear satin to-day, I as a knight must wear silk. He may wear silk if he wishes, but then he must consult me first about his intentions, for in this case it will be incumbent upon me to wear clothes of some yet more precious material, cloth-of-gold, for example. In these distinctions there is nothing snobbish. We merely follow tradition. Knighthood is in its essence *military*, and this

differentiation of costume even during intervals of peace, is held to emphasise the idea of obedience to and respect for authority. My familiar bids me further bear in mind that display—which on the part of its men, though not its women, the industrial twentieth century, perhaps mistakenly, disallows — is part of the *culture* of this England of Chaucer.

" Every craft, almost every degree and order of society, is distinguished by some costume or livery peculiar to itself. All this makes for a healthy, corporate spirit. Upon feast days, and we have many such in London, the citizens make a point of arraying themselves in such a fashion as shall redound to the honour of their divers crafts. Here is a typical example. You probably know that it is an ancient custom in the City for the Mayor and Aldermen to ride in procession to Saint Paul's to attend service there on certain festivals. They did so upon Whit Monday last, against which occasion it had been agreed that the Aldermen should wear green cloaks with green linings of either silk or taffeta. One of their number, John Sely of Wallbrook, came without his 'wedding garment,' or rather I should say there was nothing wrong with his cloak, except that he had neglected or forgotten to line it as arranged. John Sely, his brethren felt, had detracted from the dignity of the occasion. They voted that he should be fined, and that in original fashion. It was decreed that he should invite the Mayor and his fellow Aldermen to dinner."

" And did he ? "

" He did, poor fellow ! "

" The Lord Mayor's show is of course world famous. From it a foreigner may guess somewhat of the splendour and wealth of the capital. When John Phelipot was elected Mayor, it was decided that the Aldermen were to accompany

him in parti-coloured cloaks and hoods of red, scarlet, and white. I spare you the lesser particulars. Upon this occasion the penalty for default was no less a sum than twenty shillings—a very damaging fine if you consider what our money purchases. There, Sir, I think the hair is dressed as it should be."

I reserved my judgment. It was too early in the day for me to enter into this carnival spirit, but I was obviously in a London which regarded costume as a very serious matter, and better at any day and in every case to be well groomed, to use the polite vulgarism, than the reverse.

I felt fantastic, I felt grotesque, but I could not, even though I would, regard myself as the victim of some outrageous practical joke, for there was my valet-squire attired at least as oddly as I was myself. I glanced at the wall frescoes, at the diamond window panes, at the bouquet of herbs, at the pulpit-bath. All testified to the reality of these experiences. I hit the 'hutch' on which I sat. It was solid and my hand tingled. I would see this thing through, I decided, the more so as fate did not appear to have provided me with anything in the nature of an emergency exit. The clock from the church in the High Street struck five. My Squire was helping me into my 'poleynes,' upward-curling shoes of similar type to those he wore himself. "These things hang together," I mused, "they are all of a piece."

"Boots 'moist and new,'" says my familiar.

"Moist and new"?

"'The Romaunt of the Rose'" he tells me. What a popular book that seems to be! I wonder, could I purchase a copy? Handwritten it would be of course, by some 'scriveyne.' Yet clear to the eye as print, and pleasanter. With illuminations, no doubt, but fabulously dear.

The boots are soft as kid. They have no hard soles, but the familiar warns me that we may take clogs with us should I desire to walk—little hard leather over-soles, practical yet not ungainly. They are not much needed though, as all classes ride. And I remember that even Chaucer's 'Shipman' rode upon his pilgrimage to Canterbury, an ungainly, lurching figure upon a hired hack.

My Squire draws my attention to the perfect fit of my boots. Englishmen, as befits men who live much out-of-doors, have always paid particular attention to their footwear, but the modern hard-soled shoe cannot be said to 'fit like a glove,' which is precisely what the old soft-leathered shoe did. The tradition of the perfectly fitting boot was by no means extinct in Shakespeare's day, when Falstaff remarked of the Prince's companion, Poins, that he wore his boot 'very smooth like the Sign of the Leg.' "There they are," cries my Squire in triumph, "and the 'lewd and lowe' fellow, as this age calls the 'man in the street,' may look at your boots and laugh and swear you need the devil's assistance to get them on and off!"

My gloves fit likewise as well as can be desired, and my 'awmere' hangs from my wrist—the silken alms-purse which a knight carries against the occasional charities of the day. Charity in Chaucer's day appears a flower of gentler growth than to-day, and such words as 'Saint Charity' and 'Alms House' sound more pleasantly to the ear than their modern equivalents of 'poor rate' or 'work-house.'

My Squire throws a new light upon the gorgeousness of my costume. "Gay colours at all times," says he, "but not always the precious materials." The twentieth century will see these things through a false perspective, through the medium of old chronicles and illuminated vellums. But

when a man sits for his portrait, whether to medieval illuminator or modern academician, he will not presumably take the pose in one of his oldest suits. When the chronicler goes out of his way to describe the costume worn by knight or lady at tournament or pageant, he is not after all so unlike the modern journalist who informs us that Lady So-and-so was wearing the famous black pearls or what not, which she certainly would *not* have worn when spraying the roses in her country garden. Chaucer's knight when travelling and upon the road to Canterbury wore not cloth-of-gold but 'fustian,' and the poet observes that neither his yeoman nor his squire had been at the pains to brush him for his pilgrimage. He looked, at a word, a very ordinary character. The writing of history is at all times biased by the inclination of all men towards the marvellous. If the thirtieth century attempt the reconstruction of the twentieth with the newspapers for their guides, what a tale will they unfold of the 'general strike' and the 'great war,' of dope at 'night clubs,' of earthquakes and train smashes, and Bolshevik demonstrations and Russian torture. It would need a ghost from the dead to convince them that people existed even in the twentieth century who found existence humdrum, who planted cabbages in allotments, sought recreation at the 'pictures,' and were less irritated by industrial unrest than by the fact that the public houses did not open on Sundays before seven of the evening. 'The poor torn past,' all ages are to some extent 'torn,' but one gets used to it and does not notice.

"So you must allow," says my familiar, "some occasional flights of artistry to the medieval chronicler who finds that life lacks variety and that his eyes grow a little dim with looking overlong upon 'the white paper.' But you will think me very given to speechifying——"

" I should not describe you as tongue-tied, but continue, please. You interest me."

" Well, ' brave things for brave occasions,' that," says he, " is the principle upon which we work, and I am taking you to-day—if that please you—to witness a pageant, and all London will be looking its best."

" Show me rather," said I, " the normal workaday life of the people."

" That," answered he, " is in its main outlines altogether too similar to that of the twentieth century with which you are acquainted already, for you to find it either very novel or very interesting."

" How so ? "

" Well, take an example. The workaday fourteenth century has its ' mines de charboun ' or coal mines, and the coal burnt in London a reign or two back was already producing that characteristic phenomenon of the epoch of industry, the London fog. But in King Edward II.'s day the nobility and gentry enlisted that King's sympathy in the cause of hygiene and, backed by them, he prohibited the use within the walls of those vast coal fires employed by bakers, dyers, brewers, and the like, who were forced thenceforward to practise their trades at a prescribed distance from the City. And so coal was practically banned for town consumption in favour of wood until commercialism brought it back again, and with it fogs, in the days of the later Stuarts and the Georges.

" Chaucer's London has its Lollards, who are what you would call ' dissenters' perhaps, and of course freak religions of the usual crazy type, precisely as the twentieth century will have. John Cleydone, the currier, ordains his own son a priest, and they celebrate Mass together over the shop. Even Wickliffe, whom you will certainly have heard of, has

his moments of lapse when he is not above prophesying in true Hyde Park style the immediate proximity of the end of the world.

"John Ball, the Socialist, advocates revolution, and Wat Tyler and Bolshevism result. There is a short reign of terror for the nobles, followed by a rather longer one for the peasants.

"You will find that our business men are already quite alive to a world of shady ruses, and graft and jobbery. Take John de Burstalle, for example. He fraudulently enhances the price of wheat. A mean, tricky, pettifogging scoundrel is John de Burstalle and radically deficient in financial 'vision.' He goes to work upon some anæmic scheme of his own, all in a very limited and 'hole and corner' way, and is given forty days. Sir John Lyons, on the other hand, is the real unscrupulous commercial adventurer. In the last reign he forestalled wheat upon the most wholesale lines and with *success*, you understand. He made a figure at the Court of old Edward III.—the hero of Poitiers, you know—and stood high in his good graces. The King, of course, tended at times in his latter days to be a little wanting and hazy."

"Am I to take this seriously?" I inquired, "or is this a joke which I ought to see through? I expect every moment to hear that you have 'combines'!"

"But we *do* have 'combines,'" is my familiar's emphatic reply. "Only the other day the people of the 'Tower Ward' were petitioning the Lord Mayor against Hugh de Hecham. He had formed a ring of lime burners, and with some success, for lime went up a penny to a penny halfpenny per sack. Don't laugh at our pennies, for they purchase as much at least as your modern shillings. Hugh de Hecham was guilty further of intimidation, and the lime workers of Greenhithe dared not come within his area. *He* saw to that. Had they

done so, of course there would have been healthy competition, and highly artificial prices could not have been maintained for a moment."

"And what happened to him?" I asked considerably intrigued.

"He was sent to prison."

"And then?"

"When his term expired they let him out of course, and once out, he fell to his tricks again."

"And then?"

"He was put in prison again, and there, I think, he must be now."

"I am beginning to think you manage these little matters better than we do. Tell me more. I am learning 'nil admirari' if nothing else in this London of yours! Are you much troubled with strikes?"

"Why, yes, to a certain extent. We are just enjoying a strike of taverners. It arose out of an attempt on the part of the Government to prevent exploitation by standardising prices. It was decreed that the standard price for Gascony wine was to be fourpence a gallon, and eightpence the gallon for Rhenish."

"And what has happened?"

"The Mayor, Aldermen, and Sheriffs received the intelligence that all the taverners of the City had entered into a 'confederacy and alliance.' They have closed the doors of their respective inns and refuse to allow their wares to be sold, 'in contempt of our Lord the King and to the annulment of the ordinances aforesaid, and to the common loss of all the people.'"

"You astound me!"

"The strike was complete," continues my informant, "even to 'blacklegs,' for as the Sheriffs made a formal pro-

gress through the streets to compile an official list of those taverners who thus set law at defiance, they learned that Hikeman le Taverner of Smithfield and another innkeeper, a certain Reginald de Thorp, were selling their wines secretly behind closed doors and—*at the old excessive rates.*"

"You make this fourteenth century uncommonly like our twentieth; but you won't deny, I suppose, that your people are less *rushed.* They have time to breathe, to call their souls their own."

"I don't know," replies my familiar, musing. "Commerce implies competition, and competition necessarily implies long hours and low wages, if for no other reason than that there are many in the field. You will find many statutes, if you are interested in such things, which prohibit men of certain crafts from working by candlelight, though such enactments are perhaps rather enforced to ensure a high quality of workmanship than rest hours for the man. We have feast days and festivals, of course, but we certainly need them, for we go to work at dawn or earlier. We have men too, as you will have, who are intent upon amassing fortunes, and it is not likely that they will either be idle themselves or suffer their employees to be so. You spoke a little while back of Chaucer. What do you suppose he is doing now, composing 'Canterbury Tales'? No, he is immersed in those active affairs which give him the opportunity for first-hand study of his fellow-men. It is the multiplicity of men with whom his work brings him into contact that gives him that fine and sure grip upon human character, which makes of him a great psychological poet and humanist rather than a mere romance writer—for of course we have 'cheap literature,' just as your people will in the twentieth century. Though I really believe we are too robust to wallow in it as the suburbanites will then, with both feet firmly planted in the trough."

"But printing," said I, "you have no printing," for I thought I spied an advantage.

"True," said he, "but we have libraries. Many great men give the free run of magnificent libraries to all who care to make use of them. And we have an army of scribes for the multiplication of copies. The fact that we have no printing is in many ways to the good. If a man write a book with us, it is usually because he at least believes that he has something to say.

"With printing, many will write books as a trade, solely for the purpose of making money, and according to the fashion of the moment. Such books, printed to sell, and not written because their authors have anything to tell one, will have no groundwork in observation, and thus even a reader who has the trick of using his eyes will find them confuse his previously clear impressions, so that after reading a book of this type he will know, for his pains, a little less about life than he did before he began it. They will be booths where the sentimentalist and the intellectually unemployable may purchase wares after their own hearts. It is no loss to the fourteenth century if we lack the feuilletons and the cheaper Sunday papers and magazines."

"I incline to agree with you," said I, "but tell me more of Chaucer. Would it be possible, do you think, for me to visit, to be introduced to him?"

The familiar smiled, a little drearily.

"I could manage it," said he, "but I do not advise it. He is at work all day down at the Port of London—a post at the customs—and he has recently distinguished himself by detecting a conspiracy to hoodwink the Government and smuggle English wool over to Dordrecht. This has gained him the reputation of a shrewd business man amongst his employers. It has also aroused envy in certain quarters—

as you may imagine—for he has been awarded a handsome commission on the confiscated fleeces.

"You wouldn't want to talk poetry or verse-technique with him down at the office?" inquires the familiar in tones of some anxiety. "His colleagues are men of limited intelligence and wholly destitute of imagination, and it might damage Chaucer with them if they guessed that he had other interests besides bills of lading and commissions on fleeces."

I laughed and promised to forgo the visit altogether.

"But when *does* he write if he's always so busy?"

"At night mostly, I fancy, for he gets little enough time in the day, and working late would account for that chronic insomnia of which he complains in the 'Boke of the Duchesse.' Do you remember—

> 'I have gret wonder, by this lighte,
> How that I live, for day ne nighte
> I may nat slepé wel nigh noght.'?

He tells us that this 'defaute of slepe' which has plagued him for eight years and may yet be his death, has 'sleyn' his 'spirit of quiknesse'—killed his vivacity of soul—a disaster for a poet. But one is not aware of this defect in reading him. He is his own severest critic."

"But one thinks of Chaucer as a Court poet. Did not the last king, Edward III., do anything for him?"

"Not much. His late majesty, when not actually fighting the French, was practically always in love, and that is an expensive hobby, even for a king. He gave Alice Perrers three ounce-measures of seed pearls upon one occasion, and twelve thousand great pearls lustrous and rich. And her fancy dress did not cost a trifle when with her blue eyes and golden hair—though truly she had no more heart than a

stone—she rode with her royal lover in a pageant, habited as the 'Lady of the Sun.' Then it behoves a lover no less than his lady to be curious of attire. William Courtney, the great London embroiderer, was for ever sending the King his bill for such items of wearing apparel as the royal velvet waistcoat, black and adorned with golden pelicans. Even a king may be harassed by tailors' bills, so that what with Alice Perrers and the French Wars and the founding of this new 'Order of the Garter,' and waistcoats, and the rebuilding of Windsor Castle—— "

"I see," said I, "there would not be much money left for a pension for Chaucer! But the reigning king, Richard II., he has the reputation of an amateur of the arts, could he not release the first poet of Europe from the shackles of office routine, and enable him to devote his life to letters?"

The familiar shrugged and smiled.

"To appreciate genius," said he, "genius is required. If Richard were to patronise anybody, it would certainly be the wrong man."

"My familiar," said I, "the times are out of joint, and this appears to me to be the permanent condition of the world. As for reformations, they are for the most part more than futile. The world goes on its course, though reformers certainly succeed in amusing themselves at the expense of vast hordes of people whom they make excessively uncomfortable. We will discuss the matter no further. Invest me in my robes of holiday and let us leave this hotel, the novelty of which has begun to pall on me, and see how London prepares to enjoy itself."

He brings me breakfast; a cup of Gascony wine in which fragments of cake are floating—we should have partaken of nothing more substantial had we been departing away upon a boar-hunting.

He has arrayed me in a robe of scarlet with ermine lining and made himself splendid in a squirrel-lined mantle of cloth-of-silver.

I have enjoyed a hot bath. I have drunk a goblet of wine at a trifle after half-past five of the morning. I have been refreshed with a bouquet of sweet herbs carefully selected for their restorative qualities. I am clad in ermine. I have been shaved, and the soap has been washed from my cheeks with warm rose-water. As I descend the staircase I reflect with sportive malice upon that 'growth of modern luxury' with which the serious of every age reproach themselves, supposing it something that was never dreamt of in the world before their days.

Our horses are brought, and away we clatter over the cobbles of the main street of Southwark in the direction of London Bridge. That arid province—as it will be in the twentieth century—the 'South side of the Thames,' has shrunk, in this London of Chaucer, to the dimensions of a village. The sun is up and scattering the last light remnants of the mist, and thrush and linnet and the larks sing from the Southwark fields as though the golden world were come again.

"But hullo! Steady! Let us walk our horses!" I call to him, "never have I seen pavements so broken, nor should I have thought it possible a road could be allowed to fall into such decay within sight of the chief gate of a great city! I have no fancy for turning jockey in a steeplechase and should find a mule here a safer mount than a horse. Holes! Visible, palpable holes, and a cart stuck in the mud with half its load overboard! This is something that the twentieth century will do better, eh, my friend?"

"I have no brief," answers he, "for any one period as against any other. Each has its peculiar charm which is

its secret. To surprise that secret is the whole of my philosophy."

"But what are they going to do about the road?"

"They have instituted a system of tolls, and the money this brings in will be expended upon road mending. If our horses were pack horses and bearing food into the City, instead of these beautiful creatures who are bearing only our two selves, a farthing would be taken from each of us at the Bridge Gate. Carts bearing wheat and flour—certain carts that is, it depends upon the weight of the load—and all carts bearing clay, sand, or gravel, may compound by a weekly payment of threepence. And there are other charges in other cases. Many of them."

We are now within a stone's throw of the famous Bridge Gate on the spikes above which par-boiled human heads—set up not as a trophy in vengeance, but as a warning to deter intending malefactors from risking a similar trial of conclusions with the law—attract a rout of obscene birds whose raucous cries make the blood run cold when the nature of their errand is divined. The Gate presents a scene of exceptional animation. Last night's rumours of a French fleet in the Channel have made trade shaky. The soldiers upon the fortified roof are changing guard, and the old guard of a dozen men will soon be clattering away off duty and home to bed. The new guard, who likewise number a dozen, and are similarly composed with a mixture of archers and men-at-arms, are coming on duty. The look-out stands at his post and the huge horn which he wears at his girdle will enable him to summon reinforcements upon the first sign of any suspicious movements upon the Southwark side. These archers with their bows and leather jacks, these men-at-arms with their shining breast-plates, make an impressive show, but they are not soldiers by profession. I understand

that the pelterers and vintners companies have supplied the old guard from amongst their own members. The new guard are goldsmiths and saddlers. To-morrow, I gather from a written order, it will be the turn of the ironmongers, cutlers, and armourers.

But there is an enemy abroad more fearful than the raiding Frenchman or Scot or Spaniard ; a foeman relentless, guileful, devastating ; a spectre that walks as freely by noon-day as at midnight, the goblin leprosy.

And yet, to be sure, the average citizen is so familiar with the thought of his activities that he hardly gives him a thought. Authority however, vigilant for the well-being of the City, and yet conscientiously desirous of not erring upon the side of inhumanity, is hard put to it to provide for the maintenance in safety of the uninfected. Lepers are warned by criers to depart the City. They must betake themselves to places ' solitary and notably distant,' and to arrange for food to be brought them by their healthy relatives. Such official pronouncements are made time and again, and the lepers take themselves off, but they are Londoners, poor wretches, they miss the rattle of the streets, the buzz and laughter of the taverns. They tire of places ' solitary and notably distant.' London calls, and sooner or later the Lord Mayor's minions discover them back once more within the walls.

John Mayn is a typically offending leper. He has been ordered to depart not once but many times, yet he always reappears, and one can't very well *hang* a leper !

Still there are signs that patience is exhausted. Lepers found openly begging are now to be set in the public stocks at Cornhill. When once a leper has left London, the Bridge porters, if they recognise him, are not to readmit him. To this effect the porters have been convoked together to the

Guildhall, and they have taken the oath before the Lord Mayor and the Recorder. A leper on foot who, after due warning given, shall attempt to enter, shall be distrained of his outer garment—if mounted, of his horse—pending the Lord Mayor's pleasure. A third attempt is warrant for the porter to arrest and confine him in the prison above the Gate until further orders. Two hospitals have been erected in Southwark, where they may live and obtain authorised licences to beg. They must conceal themselves no more, and lurking in slums and alleys, by their continued presence there, infect sound men. And yet they contrive to do so in despite of all precautions to the contrary, so misguided are those who pity them and so weak is the Executive.

We subject ourselves for formal examination to the doctor deputed for duty at the Gate, a bearded gentleman with tired eyes, in robe and hood of red squirrel ornamented with golden buttons. The result of his examination is satisfactory, and he gives us passes without which we cannot cross over into the City either by road or water.

As I am curious to view the river traffic, I bid my Squire walk the horses and await me at the far end of the Bridge. The Thames of the Middle Ages is frequently referred to by modern writers as the 'Silent Highway,' which is strange, as bargees have been seldom reproved for taciturnity.

My waterman launches away with a loud yell of "Hoo!" —a cry similar to that of the heralds in the lists and which has then the significance of 'Break away'; but on the water it means 'Look out ahead!'

The cool fresh breezes chase from my brain the sombre thoughts to which the idea of leprosy had given rise. Every age has some scourge with the idea of which it is too familiar to trouble itself overmuch. Tuberculosis in the twentieth century, leprosy in the fourteenth. Neither our age nor

theirs eats any the less dinner for the thought of this disease or that. They are grown commonplace. But to me the idea of leprosy was the reverse of commonplace. It came to me with all the shock of the unexpected, for I had been transported from the age I knew to one with which I was unfamiliar.

The climbing sun is painting the City with the water gold of early morning, and the small waves dance and glitter. I can view the Tower magnificently from my position in the skiff. The steel helmets of the look-out men gleam like stars. The old fortress stark, grim, yet noble, looks haughtily down upon the Lilliputian dwelling-houses which cluster respectfully at their prescribed distances from the moat. The picturesque sight of so much old shipping brings to my mind the verses of that most spirited of the poetic children of Chaucer, the Scotsman Dunbar, and his lines are running in my head as I behold the flitting shallops, the stately barges with their rowers, and these huge galleys with their richly emblazoned sails and their high-built stern-castles all sculpture and gilding.

> Above all ryvers thy ryver hath renowne,
> Whose beryall stremys pleasant and preclare,
> Under thy lusty wallys renneth down,
> Where many a swan doth swymme with wyngis fair,
> Where many a boat doth glide or row with are,
> Where many a barge doth rest with top royal.
> O towne of townes, patrone and not compare,
> London thou art the flour of Cities all.

And thus of the world-renowned old bridge, which spans the river to my left hand, and is now in its meridian glory :—

> Upon thy lusty Brigge of pylers white
> Been merchauntis full royal to behold ;

Upon thy stretis go'th many a semely knyght
In velvet gownes and in chains of gold.
By Julyus Cesar thy Tour, founded of old,
May be the hous of Mars victoryall,
Whose artillary with tonge may not be told.
London, thou art the flour of Cities all.

I glance again from the old bridge to the Tower which stands invested with a heightened significance when I think of the multifarious purposes for which it is employed, at once an arsenal, a state prison, the mint where they coin their gold nobles, a fortress deemed impregnable, and a royal palace. The cadences of Dunbar keep time and chime with the pleasant plashing of the oars :—

Strong be thy wallis that about thee standis ;
Wise be thy people that within thee dwellis ;
Fresh is thy ryver with his lusty strandis ;
Blith be thy chirches, wele sownyng by thy bellis ;
Fair be thy wives right lovesome, white and small. . . .

But our progress is slow, our crossing choppy, and the queer-shaped, high-pointed ferry-boat rocks disconcertingly. The waterman, with the tact of his class, regales me with reminiscences of boating disasters. We approach the farther bank. At a quay near by that for which we are making, girls are dipping wooden buckets for the water for the household. Others are washing linen. The total absence of all factories and the comparatively diminutive size of London Town make for an almost limpid clearness of the water despite very primitive notions respecting sanitation. This water is so clear indeed that clean-living fish prosper and thrive in it. In the twentieth century, despite greater pains taken, this will be all otherwise, and laundresses will not commit a lady's fine linen to the paternal mercies of Father Thames. The waterman informs me that washerwomen have enjoyed

the privilege of washing clothes at certain quays from time immemorial. But pretenders have of late come forward to assert that these quays do not belong by right to the whole people as they always have done. They pretend that they are private property. They have taken to exploiting these poor women, and according to their capacity to pay, they extract money from them, from some a farthing, from some a half-penny, from some a penny, and from some even two pennies by quarter. These women and their men folk are in an uproar about it, and the talk now is all of a petition which they intend presenting to the Lord Mayor.

What a Colossus the Lord Mayor appears in the view of all these people! He is the protector of the poor, a dreaded magistrate, a noble among nobles, a fellow of kings. He is the tutelar genius of the City, with the Guildhall as temple for his divinity.

The passage across—owing to the greater width of the less canalised Thames, and the rush of the water created by the many pillars of the old bridge which impede its free passage — takes us hard upon a quarter of an hour. The charge for ferrying over is twopence. I find my Squire at the far end of the Bridge, we climb into the saddle and set off merrily enough to explore the town. I hazard some chance remark about the cleanliness of the streets—not clean, of course, by modern standards, but cleaner far than I had been led to imagine. The familiar informs me that the late king, Edward III., took a personal pride in it. The Normans, or so at least the Londoners believe, term our town 'La cité blanche,' to distinguish it from other and less cleanly capitals. If the masses would but co-operate with the Authorities instead of resisting them, we should all, of course, do better still. Not that my Lord Mayor hesitates to use force if occasion demand. Citizens who deposit garbage at their

house doors are fined. Passive resistance in the matter of paying up is punished by a distraint upon goods. Even the harmless pig is no longer allowed to roam the streets of London as he always has done from time immemorial. Pigs which our ancestors always encouraged for the excellent scavengers they are, are banned by the effeminate daintiness of this fourteenth century. But the Law is not tyrannical. A Londoner may keep a pig, of course, but in his own house. He must not let it wander abroad. The King's archers have orders to shoot.

Dead sows are still, from time to time, left about in odd corners by owners who decide that they have no further use for them. They are not left at the house doors, of course, now the Government has grown so interfering. But they are flung away by the banks of the Thames or the moat of the Tower, or a little way beyond one or another of the City gates.

From time to time some rascal butcher lighting upon these treasures, succumbs to the temptation of flaying the corpses clandestinely and selling the meat to his unsuspecting fellow-citizens. But it is a dangerous game to play. Once let the fact be proven home at my Lord Mayor's Court at the Guildhall, and the criminal will shortly find himself standing in the pillory, while the offensive meat out of which he thought to make good money burns gently beneath his nose.

There are 'raykers,' or scavengers, who drive dust carts which work in connection with dust boats, and boatmen are compelled, under serious penalties, to bear all refuse far beyond the confines of the City. Down at the docks, systematic precautions are taken to ensure cleanliness. Dowgate Dock furnishes a typical example. It gives permanent employment to five carters whose sole office is to rid the place

of refuse. These fellows are provided for out of tolls levied both on ships entering the dock and vehicles making use of the quays.

But there are terrible lapses, my familiar continues. Were I to take you through some of the mean streets which lie between Holborn and the river, I verily believe you would be sick. Butchers in defiance of the King's express ordinances to the contrary—which prohibit all slaughtering of cattle within the walls, and appoint for this purpose the villages of Knightsbridge and Stratford-le-Bow—despite these enactments, butchers kill their beasts in slaughter-houses by Holborn Bridge, carry the offal through the narrow streets publicly, and throw it into the Thames. The penalty for slaughtering in London, instead of in the two especially appointed villages, is confiscation of the meat and imprisonment of the body of the offender for the space of one year. But the butchers are a well organised body of men, and all in league to assist and abet one another, so the Law is defied, for the Executive is weak. And pending that thorough reformation which is contemplated, blood lies putrefying in the gutters, the air hangs close and fetid, and cases of serious illness are attributed by physicians acquainted with the neighbourhood to the lack of civic sense displayed by this powerful knot of selfish tradesmen.

Fleet Prison constitutes another crying scandal. Inquiry is being made into the matter now, and a Commission are sitting in St Bride's Church. This briefly is what has happened. About a year ago it was proposed that a moat should be dug about the prison for an additional defence. It was determined that this should be ten feet wide and deep enough to support at every point a ship of one ton's burden. The proposal was carried into effect. The moat was constructed. The banks sloped gently down to the water, and the young

trees which they planted upon them made this corner of Fleet an idyllic place to walk in. This was only one year ago and what, I ask you, is the place like now? A number of citizen's wives have acquired the habit of throwing their refuse into the water daily. No less than three tanneries, all standing within an easy bowshot of the prison, are draining into the moat, and several sewers. Furthermore, no less a number than thirteen 'wardrobes'—as the politeness of the fourteenth century terms our 'usual offices'—have been actually erected upon the banks. It is to find a remedy for these abuses that the Commission has been called, and whatever they decide to do they must do quickly, for the prisoners are complaining of 'grievous maladies.'

But these things are not typical, they are lapses. Upon the whole, the Londoner is rather inclined to daintiness with his dust carts and 'raykers.' Lydgate in his last poem satirises the vogue of the long sleeve and says that London will no longer need brooms, for the nobles themselves will sweep up all the dirt with the trailing ends.

"Look up there," cries my familiar, breaking off abruptly, "there go some of our sanitary officials!" He was staring straight up into the sky. I followed, with some astonishment, the direction of his gaze, and beheld a quantity of kites hanging in the air with that singular beauty of poise for which all that family is famous. "Kites," says my instructor, "and carrion crows. They do yeoman labour in swooping down to seize upon neglected morsels."

As we clatter over the cobbles of old London all seems fresh, all captivating, that meets the eye. This London is very, very small, as the entire population of England does not exceed two million. Churches, castles, and some few large houses are built of stone, but the house of 'half-timber' is still the rule. Of these dwelling-houses the more old-

fashioned have but one story surmounted by a sleeping loft, but this is a building age, and here and there houses appear which can boast that second story which contains the 'solar' or sun-parlour. The windows are for the most part unglassed, mere open spaces with lattices of thin rifts of oak, which bring to mind the derivation of the word window —'wind eye.'

Through these open spaces we catch vivid glimpses of quaint interiors. The good wife stirs the pot, the cobbler sews at his seam and carols the song of the hour in English or Anglo-Norman. And they sing well, these handicraftsmen, for the service of the Church has accustomed them to good music from childhood up, and never has she devoted more attention to the roll of her organs and the chanting of her monks.

Ale-houses are legion. The one-storied, or even the two-storied house, gives small scope for the nicer privacies of family life. Bedrooms not seldom do duty for sitting-rooms to the detriment of delicacy, but not necessarily of decency. But if domestic life be cramped, never was social life more expansive. There is hardly a street but has several ale-houses or a tavern. These ale-houses display, practically all of them, the same sign, a pole nine foot long, the 'ale-stake,' from which dangles the bush of ivy sacred in pagan days to Bacchus. But if liquor be good, customers will take note of it, sign or no sign, by which token men still affirm that 'good wine needs no bush.' The projecting brackets which support the painted signs of the richer dwellings, delight the eye with the grace and intricacy of the metal work. At street corners or open spaces we see wells, or elaborate water towers, where young girls and old gammers congregate and gossip and fill their buckets. A rivulet which has meandered in from the open, keeps for awhile a pleasant murmur beside

our road. For that artificial new river is not yet dreamt of to swallow up into one water so many tributaries of Thames. We cross the Fleet River by bridge. I had not thought of it as so large, nor suspected it of carrying so great a quantity of river craft.

The 'kennel,' or gutter, keeps the centre of the street. Upper stories of shops and dwelling-houses project above the roadway, for the City is already overcrowded and it is a problem to find space. Besides, everybody who can contrive to do so, prefers the life within the walls to that outside them. Walls are built for security, not for adornment. In France and Flanders—those countries of never-ceasing conflict—the suburbs of a town are liable to be fired by the citizens themselves upon the approach of an enemy. Otherwise they might both shelter him and screen his movements.

There is something strangely pleasing in the mere rise and fall of the streets. There has been no levelling; we are following the natural conformation of the soil. There is a great variety, too, in the aspect of streets and houses which have none of them been subjected to a too rigid tyranny of plumb-line, rule, and level. The twentieth century will see the London of geometers: the fourteenth beholds that of the handicraftsmen.

I obtain many glimpses of the old Gothic St Paul's. I had never realised upon how high a hill the cathedral stood, or how well that site was selected even in pre-Christian days for that Temple of Diana which was once, perhaps, the glory of a yet older London. This is a city of 'dreaming spires,' of those spires which come home to the hearts of an essentially romantic people. The winding streets open suddenly upon strange vistas, and the Gothic style possesses a charm which is at the heart alike of wit and of romance, the charm of the unexpected.

Carvings, carvings everywhere. Upon every church the sculptors display their pageant of grotesques. Upon the old Lud gate a statue of the legendary Lud—'in war hardy and bold, in peace a jolly feaster,'—offers an antic presentment of kingly dignity.

At Smithfield we are to see a fair, not indeed one of note like that held here at St Bartholomew's tide—in the interests of which shopmen are compelled to shut their shops up and display their goods for sale at the fair instead—but a smaller exhibition from which none the less I promise myself some amusement.

The crowd, all going the same way, grows thicker every moment. Now it is a lady borne in a horse-litter whose strange vehicle is thrusting me into the gutter. Now I myself am the culprit, and rein in just in time to save myself from riding down a peasant in a cart drawn by three dogs. Now it is my Squire who is at fault, at least I judge so much from the compliments, obviously insincere, which pass between him and a bagpiper. I cannot follow up my researches further for my horse is shying; a cymbal player is giving a taste of his craft to an itinerant vendor of bird cages.

Smithfield at last! We picket our horses and wander from group to group collecting impressions.

Booth Number One. A damsel catches up a small boy who protests vehemently, mounts herself upon stilts five feet high, and proceeds to stalk up and down with the child in her maternal embrace and a water-can balanced upon her head.

Booth Number Two. More tricks of agility with a pronounced element of the marvellous. To the music of a double flute player, a lady advances bearing a pair of two-handed swords. These she places pummel downward upon the ground, then laying the palms of her hands over their

upturned points, proceeds to balance herself upside down. She achieves an instantaneous success, and the audience gaze with rapture at her scarlet stockings.

Booth Three. A 'karole,' or dance. Two gipsy girls stalk each other like wild beasts of the jungle. Now the one, now the other, leaps out as though from ambush, and always so soon as they are together, they kiss, then fling apart. A strange savage dance brought hither years back by long dead Crusaders, and still redolent of the sand-storms of the desert and the blazing sun.

Booth Four. The professional story-teller—another relic of the East and of the countrymen of Haroun al Raschid, as the pseudo-Christian machinery of his story does little to conceal. This incomparable liar concludes his tale somewhat thus : " and so this holy Saint releases from the stocks this man-slayer, and this woman who had been his accomplice in this hideous murder, and he sets in their stead in the stocks those two fiends which had heretofore possessed them. And this murderer being now at large, runs like a wild beast about this Syrian desert, and through being naked to the weather, he becomes hairy as an ape. But anon later, being by this same holy Saint converted, his limbs became smooth as any egg, and he founded the biggest monastery of those parts, and all of alabaster. . . ."

A friar approaches us, a member of one of the begging orders, with a pedlar's pack, and chants his wares, his

> 'purses, pynnes, and knyves,
> With gyrdles and gloves for wenches and wives.'

We stand for some while before a three-decker theatre. A miracle play is in progress. We learn from a bystander that, sleeping and eating hours omitted, the whole piece will play out three days, and that the flood is going to be mar-

vellous. The scenery is simple. A back cloth half black, half white, represents the Night of Chaos, and Light which the Almighty is now creating. An angel with wings of peacock blue and gold is rhapsodising upon this admirable new development. A fiend with goat legs, head-feathers, and mask, is sneering. Heaven triumphs, but the fiend has the 'back-chat,' and his equivocal asides provoke much hoarse laughter from the 'lewd and lowe' fellows. We do not wait long, for the characterisation lacks subtlety and with the plot we are already familiar. But we happen back casually about an hour later when we assist at the creation of our First Parents who, following literally upon the text of Holy Writ, come forth naked and unashamed. They are very well received.

We breakfasted early and——

"Surely it must be lunch time?" I ask.

"*Dinner* time and past," my Squire makes answer, calculating with his eye the angle of the sun. For such a thing as a watch is as yet undreamt of.

"We take only two meals a day," he continues, "for the breakfast was a very slight affair, as you remember——"

"Only too well——"

"And of course there will be no tea. It is the same system practically that will obtain in many parts of the Continent in the twentieth century. So make a good dinner now, for dinner is *the* meal of the day."

My familiar heads the way and we succeed at last in reaching East Chepe. Cooks and taverners stand at their doors and bellow their wares in a manner which survives to-day only in the back slums of a Saturday night. There are no posters because no printing, and so the chief medium of advertisement is the brazen-lunged prentice boy and noise is his element. The clatter is bewildering. "Pies! Hot Pies!"

"White Wine of Alsace!" "Come buy! Come buy! What d'ye lack? What d'ye lack, my Masters? What d'ye lack?" "Red Wine of Gascoyne!" "Roast Ribs of Beef!" "Come buy!" "What d'ye lack?" "Hot Pies!" The pieman, a very importunate fellow, even goes so far as to pluck me by the sleeve. Luckily the inn where we are to dine is now close at hand.

My familiar imparts some hurried instructions as to table etiquette. We cannot sit together for he, as my Squire, will have to carve for me. My plate will probably be a slice of bread; perhaps my neighbour will desire to share it with me. I shall find knives and spoons, but of course it is the fingers that I must chiefly rely upon for eating. A vessel of scented water will probably be carried round first for pouring over the hands, and the meat I can cut into small convenient pieces. So long as I remain in Chaucer's London, I am urged to remember that it is my left hand *not* my right which I shall require for eating, and of *that* hand by preference the first two fingers and thumb *only*.

'Two fingers and a thumb
For that is courtesy.'

There is an etiquette about these matters. We must not offend the punctilious. Should some high dignitary take a morsel from his plate with his fingers and offer to place it in my mouth, it will be well for me to appear pleased. This is an honour he does me. The trick comes to us from the East, the Crusaders have made it the 'last cry.' If we desire to be in the fashion, we must orientalise.

If I should desire to blow my nose I must do so with the fingers of my right hand, *not* those of the *left*; which I am using as a fork—and I may wipe my fingers *afterwards—upon my tippet*! My misery is abject. The meal begins.

One of our number, a Franciscan friar, says grace for the company, and as a practical expression of charity throws into the alms-basket the loaf for the poor. There is a soup with a delightfully Anglo-Norman name, 'Potage de Frumenty,' composed of milk of almonds, broth, boiled wheat, and beaten yolks of eggs, the whole being coloured with saffron. I feel drawn towards this dish, the more so because I see several little soup bowls, some of yellow some of green earthenware, on the tables about me, and I imagine, in my twentieth-century innocence, that I shall have the monopoly of my own soup bowl. I am deceived. My neighbour upon the right dips his spoon into my bowl before I have had time to dip my own. And it is *he* who takes me to task, albeit not unpleasantly, for a social solecism which it seems *I* have committed. There are several dogs prowling about the floor and as one of these has been rubbing himself against my leg, I have so far forgotten myself as to *pat* him. As though that were already not bad enough, I have patted him with that sacred left hand which is to do the office of fork. Of course my neighbour is right; one must not pat a dog with a *fork*, it is unhygienic, and I have nothing to say when reminded that the practice of patting hounds during meals, though doubtless very prevalent in *other* cities, is not the custom in *London*.

There is fish, but not a fish that I recall having eaten in the twentieth century, pike, to wit. Pike is a scavenger, and I anticipate coarseness both in flavour and quality. But I am wholly unable to judge as to the merits of the fish, the sauce is too 'poignant' and too 'sly.' Wine, vinegar, cinnamon, sugar, salt, and powdered ginger—prepared of course in the correct proportions—are all ingredients. The fish is sliced and our portions laid upon platters of coarse bread—the bread we eat is the manchet, or cake bread.

Here once more I discover to my dismay that I am sharing with my neighbour, and as soon as we have both finished, that stickler for etiquette empties our joint platter upon the rushes where the dogs make short work of what remains. There are stewed pigeons—in small pieces, served cut conveniently to the fingers—upon the same platters we have used for the pike, and the sauce this time is concocted from broth, sage, parsley, hyssop, cloves, savoury verjuice, and pepper. And there are other dishes. I rise at last with a very twentieth-century indigestion. Did I tell you that there was a band to cheer us during the repast? Minstrels played and sang ditties in French and English. 'Jillian and Julian' one was called, and another began, I remember, 'Dieu vous sauve, Dame Emma.' It was all very antique, and yet in some strange way queerly modern. Rhenish was the drinking, at least in my case, with Hippocras to follow, a delicate wine but flavoured with spice and strong, the nearest approach of the Middle Ages to the modern liqueur.

There are great preparations for this afternoon, but the familiar warns me that it will not be possible to witness more than the merest fraction of the festive proceedings. There will be a concert in 'Paul's,' another on London Bridge. By Temple Bar there will be a really unique exhibition. They have planted out an artificial jungle wherein are serpents, lions, a bear, an elephant, a beaver, a tiger and—wonder of wonders!—a unicorn! And all these creatures are to be seen running about there, fighting, jumping.

The City Companies as we come into Chepe are already lining the great open space in the parti-coloured splendour of liveries new bought against this occasion. The Lord Mayor comes into view in the van of the procession amidst

his Aldermen and his Sheriffs and with his Sword of Justice borne before him.

The richness of the colouring of all about me is extraordinary, and I feel that when I return to that twentieth century from which I have so strangely emerged, a great joy will have passed out of life. The Aldermen are attired in suits of parti-colour—red, scarlet, and white. They wear their badges and their chains, for such symbols of dignity become the office.

I was not prepared for the acclamation which the Lord Mayor's presence evokes from the masses. The respect they accord him is such as the Venetians accord their Doge, but his power is in point of fact immeasurably superior. He is the first Baron of the realm, the supreme Warden of the Bridge Gate, the Walls, the Tower, and of Montfichet and Baynard Castles. Not the King himself can enter his gates unchallenged.

Following the Lord Mayor's retinue come the soldiers, noblemen, and retainers of the Royal party. The King is crowned with a coronal of gold and rubies which suits well with his long and flowing yellow locks. A handsome face and yet a weak one. His robes of red velvet clasp across his breast with a trinket of gold and pearl and lapis of a good six inches high. His embroidered velvets fall voluminously over the cloth-of-gold trappings of his roan horse 'Barbary,' while he leads in leash his favourite greyhound Matthew, a sophisticated creature sick of Nottinghamshire and the country, and overjoyed to return to civilisation and London, to crafty cooks and sauces keen.

The Queen wears the 'cote hardie,' the close-fitting sleeved waistcoat of which she herself has set the fashion, for she has beautiful arms and knows it, and the skin-tight sleeves reveal to perfection that shapely line which she loves

further to emphasise with a row of sapphire buttons from wrist to elbow. These sleeves of peacock blue contrast with the pale blue body, in like fashion as the pale blue skirts with the peacock train, the latter enriched with her cognizances of the Hawk and the Flower de Luce.

My familiar, playing the herald's part, deciphers for my delectation the symbolism of coats and trappings. The mighty horse of the Duke of Norfolk proclaims his rider by a device of silver lions and mulberry trees upon a scarlet footcloth, while that of Henry of Hereford bears a blazoning of golden swans and antelopes upon velvet trappings barred in alternate bars of blue and green. The English taste for finery is well known to the Parisians, for it is from London that they have borrowed the high fantastic head-gear of their ladies. It is known to the Scots who satirise us in rude and railing rhymes.

> 'Long beards witless,
> Gay cloaks graceless,
> Maketh England thriftless.'

But the gay cloaks are not graceless, and the shape and fashion of these garments, which never disguise the lines of the body, might commend them to Praxiteles, while this jewelled splendour of colour was unknown to the Greeks. This pertains to the epoch of romance and to the Middle Ages alone. It is a considered luxury, a beautiful extravagance.

There is colour harmony likewise between members of the procession and spectators. One gets a general impression of red and blue craftsmen with parti-coloured bodies, merchants in velvet gowns and golden chains, knights in cloth-of-gold and cloth-of-silver, priests' hoods, gay cloaks, merry mantles, and dyed ostrich feathers. Even beggars empty of purse are rich in colour, and though their toes

look out from their shoes, their gowns and capuchins are of blues, reds, greens. And there is the sheen of arms and armour, the bright heads of bills and halberts. The men-at-arms have no easy task to restrain within limits the eager, boisterous crowd. The windows 'are all full of heads,' and above the windows the picturesque irregularities of ancient roofs, and those turrets which contain the staircases in rich men's houses, stand in fantastic tracery against the sky.

By the Cross in Chepe artificers have set up a carpeted stage. They have draped it about with tapestries, and have built upon it a bell-roofed pavilion—gilt above, scarlet and green beneath—supported upon slender pillars of exquisite construction. Adjoining this gay erection, a fountain, adorned with all manner of grotesques, spouts forth red wine with a melodious plashing tantalising to the thirsty.

And now a youth bearing two jewelled crowns takes his stand upon the stage habited as an angel. Here is no white-robed creature of Puritan fancy, but a flaming apparition of this fourteenth century when man's conception of the Heaven-dwellers has caught insensibly a heightened tinge from the unrestrained gorgeousness of the Papal Court. His aureole is of glass of Venice ribbed with gold. His coroneted golden locks cling crisply about his shoulders. His emerald green mantle, looped about his shoulder with giant sapphires, emphasises rather than conceals his trailing pearl-wrought robes of sealing-wax red. His sandals upon the tapestried floor boards are agleam with gold. He is girdled with gold, and his o'ermantling wings of gold, of crimson, and of peacock feathers, meet above his head. 'The peacock,' sings Chaucer, 'with his angel feathers bright,' as though the plumage of the peacock should receive an added lustre from the comparison with angel wings.

By this time the royal party has called a halt before the pavilion, and the sovereigns receive, as a gift from the City, the glittering crowns. This done, to prove that he has not forgotten the ways of men, the liberal angel gives them wine from a jewelled cup, which ceremony duly concluded, he gives their trains to drink, and then—while the bowmen keep a sharp look-out so that nobody snatches the goblet—he gives drink to all who will; wine from gold.

"There will be further pageants and ceremonies of course, but I should advise our beating a retreat before the crowds scatter and block the streets."

"Whither now?"

He took me to the 'Pui,' a Bohemian club in the Vintry, which gave me yet another sidelight on Chaucer's London. From its members I gathered a good deal concerning the origin and customs of the society which took its curious name from the little town of Le Puy in Auvergne. A statue of the Virgin in a church of that town was long an object of especial veneration to pilgrims, and so many jongleurs and minstrels and 'diseurs,' or story-tellers, repaired to the line of march to enliven the road, that the place-name Pui came to connote in the popular mind something Bohemian and poetic. As Art knows no frontiers, the 'Pui' scorned to dedicate itself to any one particular artist saint, but with an impartiality not untinged with egotism preferred to regard itself as under the especial patronage of 'God, Our Lady Saint Mary, and All Saints both male and female.' One of the avowed objects of the Club was this—'That the City of London might be renowned for all good things in all places, and to the end that mirthfulness, peace, honesty, joyousness, gaiety, and good love with infinity might be maintained.'

The Club was cosmopolitan, but an English Londoner, one John de Cheshunt, was its present 'prince' or presi-

dent. Some of the members were rich merchants, but as others were poor minstrels, expenses were kept within limits. The hall, for instance, was decorated not with rich tapestries, but with green boughs provided freshly against the feast day. Song writing, not wealth, was the qualification for membership, the committee of selection being composed both of poets to judge the words and musicians the air. On these occasions the poem which had won the presidency, 'plainly and correctly written without default,' was nailed to the wall, the composer's coat of arms being set above it. Supper followed, then a procession through the streets, then a dance at the new president's house. At the 'Pui' we stayed a good while listening to the singing and reciting. We had a good supper into the bargain, not unduly elaborate nor ostentatiously served.

The streets were cool and the crowds had scattered when we found ourselves once more in the open. Princes, knights, and great ladies had all departed, and a gorgeous feast in Westminster Palace was signalising a king's return to his capital. Curfew booms, 'swinging slow with sullen roar.' There is a cool wind in the street. The moon is rising.

And now fantastic shapes creep stealthily from byways and alleys, and one hears ever and anon a burst of half suffocated laughter. First they appear singly, then by twos and threes, then group melts into group and a dozen becomes four dozen and that fourscore.

"Mummers," whispers my familiar, "we can watch them from this dark corner under the archway. It is an old custom for folks to assemble together upon a feast day in this fashion wearing all manner of grotesque disguises."

"Why, it's a saturnalia!"

"These meetings are forbidden under the penalties both of fine and imprisonment—'disguisings with any

feigned beards, painted visards, deformed or coloured visages, in any wise'—so runs the strict letter of the law."

But I am listening with but half an ear, for I am absorbed by the extraordinary spectacle which meets my eyes. A twentieth-century Bank Holiday crowd has no inclination towards 'disguisings.' And as they emerge into the open they appear, these reeling wassailers, distinctly diabolic. Heads are transformed into the likenesses of bears, bulls, apes, goblins, and long-eared owls.

"Archæologists," observed the familiar, "have seen in these mummings the direct survival of the Roman feast of the Lupercalia. Pope after Pope has anathematised them"—but one of the mummers is blowing a horn and the remainder of this instructive conversation is lost upon me. The mummers reel and dance, brawl and tipple, and make Witches' Sabbath in the City. There is singing, there is dancing, women are laughing, bagpipes calling, white arms beckoning——

I stepped forward from under the archway for some one was smiling at me. She was dressed in—but that is neither here nor there.

"Though forbidden by law," my familiar is observing, "these mummings are of frequent occurrence. The Executive is weak——"

"I am glad of that," said I.

## CHAPTER III

## *The Londoner goes a Pilgrimage in the Days of Henry V.*


VIEW OF VENICE

*(From a woodcut illustration to Bernhard von Breydenbach's "Journey to the Holy Land, 1483-4")*

## *The Londoner goes a Pilgrimage in the Days of Henry V.*

HE BORE staff, scrip, and bottle. His face was weather-beaten as a sailor's. His bushy beard hung low upon his chest. The white cross upon the shoulder of his flowing grey gown, together with that other sewn into the front of that broad-brimmed hat of his, bore witness to the fact that he was an English Pilgrim who had made the voyage to the Holy Sepulchre—English, for Englishmen alone wear these white crosses, but the French red, the Flemish green, and every nation some distinguishing colour. In place of sandals, he wore a sort of top-boots of soft yellow leather, clinging closely to his calf. His boots were much worn and cobbled, and his grey gown patched, which made me think that he was now but newly arrived from his travels. His manner was easy and affable, his eyes lacked neither shrewdness nor humour. His name was Brother Ambrose, his vocation a monk, and his native city London.

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Having obtained, said he, my licence to travel from our Holy Father the Pope, together with testimonial letters from the General of my Order, and from such other men of mark as were of his or my acquaintance, I set out upon my journey. We were for the first part of the road a tolerably large company, some pilgrims but not all. Some were men-at-arms upon the road to Dover, who were to take shipping there for the wars in France. Others were pilgrims for

Canterbury who went but a short part of the road with us. Some few there were that were bound for the shrine of Saint James of Compostella, and yet others though but two or three who were bound like myself for the Holy City. We had with us both singers and pipers, as the manner is, and upon approaching any village we that were pilgrims would draw ourselves up into a column and march through in procession, our singers singing and our pipers playing. The dogs would rush barking towards us enraged by the sound of the pipes, and the village girls and plough folk would come flocking about us to wish us God-speed, and they would bring us fresh loaves, and cheese, or fruit, and ale in leather jacks. Our passage was an event, and from the uproar we created with the dogs barking, the villagers calling blessings after us, our singers singing and our pipers playing, you might have thought it was King Harry himself upon a royal progress with his clarions and all his other minstrels.

This was not my first pilgrimage. I had seen the Holy Blood at Hailes. I had made the pilgrimage to Our Lady of Walsingham and to the shrine of Saint Thomas at Canterbury. I had seen the famous roods at Chester and Bromholme and the statues of Our Lady at Boxley and at Wilsden. I had been to this place and that; but this was the first occasion, though not the last, on which my eyes were to behold that strip of blue water which separates us from Normandy.

Did any misgivings harass me? Did I for the moment regret the calm of my cloister, the frugal meals in the refectory, the cultured, agreeable companionship? Let me not conceal from you that I did. My thoughts ran upon all that ever I had heard or read of the perils of the salt sea. Tempests presented themselves to my mind in all their

horror, and calms more terrible than they, when sweet water becomes putrid, a vessel swarms suddenly with lice and rats, and when men even of the toughest fibre have been known to run lunatic through the stench and confinement of their cabin. I could not put from me a vision of quicksands, whirlpools, sunken rocks, and shipwrecking reefs. I was troubled in my mind by the thought of the fish named 'Troys.'

For this fish has a beak shaped like an auger, with which ofttimes, rising from his watery lurking places upon some vessel's approach, he will transfix her timbers and sink her with all hands. He cannot be repelled save by a fearless look. For let some stout fellow lean over the bulwarks and gaze unflinchingly into that fish's eyes, he may drive him away, but that fish—never doubt me—stares back with a terrible gaze. If Troys be outstared he will sink back baffled, but should the watcher quail or shudder, though never so slightly, he may bid his friends farewell, for Troys will rear himself up, snatch that forlorn one from the vessel's side, and drag him beneath the surface to his ill-favoured banquet hall to have his repast of him.

I meditated further upon what I had learnt from books or from the reports of others of the malady of sea-sickness. I recalled the case of Aristippus the philosopher, who once when seafaring was racked with nausea, and in this sad state of the stomach despaired of his life. At this climax of his fears a meddling, talkative clown demanded of him the reason why philosophers should fear while clowns were courageous?

"The reason," said Aristippus, "is this, we have not the same sort of life to lose. For I, who bear about with me a soul stuffed with virtues, show reason in dreading that a philosopher should die. But it would be preposterous for

you to display the faintest solicitude about the life of so detestable a scoundrel as yourself."

But upon this short sea-voyage from Dover to Calais, I met with no ill chances. The fish Troys never so much as showed his beak, nor was I discomposed by that inconstancy of stomach which had so sapped the equanimity of the philosopher Aristippus. Only certain brazen mariners, long familiar with the chances of sea-living, looked at me methought derisively, and I made no copious repast, contenting myself with a toast salted and a cup of hot Malvesy wine.

Disembarking at Calais, I fared on and ever on through Normandy and through Burgundy, whose people are the allies of our English kings, and through the expansive plains of Lombardy. This Lombardy is fertile in vineyards and diversified by tall and gracious poplar-trees, which speak to the thirsty traveller with a voice as of cooling water. It is a land of wine and fruits and songs, of purple mountains seen afar off, and of lakes that lie outspread to the sun with the sheen of jewels. But I fared but indifferently in my inns, sleeping sometimes two, more frequently three men to a bed.

Within a few leagues from Venice my fellow-travellers and I were delayed by a storm of wind and rain, so that we tarried in a tavern for shelter, but four knights of our party, who could not abide for impatience, pushed onward before us. Our road led through a dark copse, and in this copse they were ambushed by brigands. They defended themselves right stoutly, but they were overpowered, and dragged bleeding from many sword wounds far from the public way. Their wallets, scrips, and purses were emptied, and their very garments stripped from them lest they might have money in reserve sewed within the linings. This thing accom-

plished, those robbers compelled them, at the sword's point, to swear a great oath that they would reveal nothing of this matter for a full space of three days. This oath they swore, for what debate is possible between naked men and naked weapons? Having stripped our knights of their gay garments, they proffered them foul rags in exchange, affecting to regret that the cut was so country-tailor like. They now wished the unfortunates 'God-speed,' bade them have an eye to the company they kept, insomuch as there were rogues in those parts, doffed bonnet and rode away.

So our four hapless companions dragged themselves back to the public way, and in this plight we came up with them, for the rain had by this time ceased falling. If we were amazed at their indecorous appearance, we were yet more so by their reticence and well-nigh truculent taciturnity. For these knights, being honest gentlemen and men of their word, kept silence for their oath's sake, and this gave time to those brigands to ride leisurely away, untroubled by any hue and cry until it was just three days too late. You may believe (said my monk) that after much wayfaring we were right glad at the last to behold that glorious city and thrice noble republic of Venice.

Now when the magnificos saw so great a quantity of pilgrims flocking together as we were now grown to be, they chose forth from their number two sea-captains, nobles and great rivals, to waft us oversea to Joppa. Their names were Augustine Contarini and Peter de Lando, which two signors set up each his banner in that smaller market-place before the Doge's Palace. About their banner-poles stood a rabble of their retainers, touting most villainously for custom.

Peter's men magnified Peter and vilified Augustine. Augustine's men exalted Augustine and defamed Peter. Peter, as we chose to regard him, was fiend or angel. So

likewise was Augustine. And the terms with which either party bespattered the other were such as a saintly but plebeian hermit might apply in passion to one who had known relations with the Devil.

" Then," said I, as spokesman for my fellows, " I declare for that captain who shall the sooner be ready to sail." Whereupon that entire rabblement replied with a great shout : " We depart from Venice this very day and hour," which I knew to be a lie.

We therefore withdrew and taking water, as we hoped unobserved, bade our gondoliers row us to Signor Peter's galley where she lay at anchor in the harbour, intending to inspect her at our leisure, and when we had done so, to examine thoroughly in her turn that of his rival Augustine, so that we might form our own conclusions as to the merits of the galleys and come to a preference accordingly. But we had hardly climbed aboard Signor Peter's galley, when Signor Peter himself came aboard after us—as it were by the merest hazard. He declared himself as much surprised as delighted at this meeting, welcomed us with a world of courtly graces, and caused to be spread for us upon the poop a collation of Alexandrian comfits and Cretan wine. But despite his interested blandishments we did not so far commit ourselves as to declare definitely that we would sail with him. But I thanked him for his manifold courtesies in my most elegant Latin.

We now withdrew to inspect, in its turn, the galley of the rival magnifico, Signor Augustine. By the strangest chance in the world this captain likewise happened to be coming aboard at the same moment that we did, and he in his turn treated us to a second collation with yet more comfits of Alexandria and yet deeper vessels of Cretan wine ; wherefore we declared for Augustine. And I remembered next

morning having made a second after-dinner speech in what I hoped might be Italian, and which purchased me great fame amongst my fellows for a linguist, for Signor Augustine feigned to look modest and blush and be most deeply affected by my compliments and protestations. But this was his craft, for I learned from him later that he understood never a syllable.

In this my discourse I declared that the Venetian sea-captains were the skilfullest in the world, and the Venetian ladies the loveliest. But I added a mental reservation. I excepted from this general proposition the mariners and ladies of my native city of London, whom I stated, but not audibly, to be as superior to these Italians in all accomplishments befitting, as the greatest wits amongst men are to apes. And in conclusion, " We will sail with you," said I, " for you have a very open, engaging, and sterling countenance, and indeed there is but one man in Venice with whose name the epithet ' rogue ' should be lastingly conjoined. I refer, Signor, as you will readily divine, to your infamous rival Peter de Lando ! " We were all of us very merry upon this occasion, but upon the morrow we were troubled with headaches. One of our number also, a knight, was much afflicted with an ague caused by a wetting, for his foot slipped after the collation, so that he fell from a ladder into the water between our galley and the gondola which was to bring us back to land. We were therefore in less gamesome mood than we had been overnight, and taking counsel together, we thought fit a little to qualify my late sweeping assertions. So we penned a contract of many saving clauses which we persuaded our signor to sign and seal, and then deposited with the recognised authorities in an office of the Doge's Palace. Amongst these clauses I recall :—

"*Item.* That Signor Augustine shall carry armament sufficient to defend us, in case of need, against pirates.

"*Item.* That he shall give us two set meals a day of food and drink, together with sweet water enough, good wine, bread, biscuit, meat, eggs, vegetables, and

"*Item.* Before our meals—as is the custom on shipboard—an appetiser of Malvesy wine.

"*Item.* That he shall protect us against any menace or attack on the part of his galley-slaves, on board most certainly, and, according to his ability, on shore also, should we go ashore at any port.

"*Item.* That Signor Augustine should provide room for any pilgrim to rest upon the upper deck, should such pilgrim be too ill to abide the stench of the cabin, and

"*Item.* That Signor Augustine should provide a convenient place aboard where we might, if we chose, keep chickens."

To all this and much more our captain signed and sealed, for he knew, had he not done so, that Signor Peter would, and indeed such was the rivalry between the captains that, I believe, had we bade him confer upon us the privilege of keeping an elephant in his state apartment, he would incontinently have done so.

So these matters being amicably adjusted, my friends and I invoked the protection of such saints as are more particularly addressed by those who intend making a sea-voyage, I mean St Raphael the archangel, whom we besought to guide us as he did Tobias. St Martha also, the hostess of our Lord, to find us good accommodation in worthy inns should we go ashore. St Julian also we invoked, who is indeed the patron saint of innkeepers—but he in his life days would bear Christians over his ferry and thereto lodge and house them free of charge, even though they were

lepers, while our Signor Augustine was little better than a Jew. St Christopher, as the patron saint of all which concerns ferries, was not forgotten of us, and in conclusion we besought St Michael, the archangel militant, to defend us stoutly against all foes visible and invisible.

Then to market, to purchase commodities of many kinds necessary or expedient for a sea-voyage. Amongst these medicines, both laxative and restorative. A feather bed to each man to stow into his berth, together with mattress, two pairs of sheets, two pillows and a quilt, and these things we covenanted with the shopkeeper to sell to him again, upon our return to Venice, at a reduced figure. Then wine and water-barrels, three of ten gallons' capacity, for sundry who had made this journey aforetime assured us that the wine which a captain provides for the use of pilgrims is in general but meagre, while the water stinks. To contain these wine and water-barrels, with such other commodities as we were now about purchasing, we discovered, meet to our requirements, stout chests with locks to them lest members of the crew should rob us, or our fellow-pilgrims.

We were warned furthermore that we should desire ofttimes to make collations at other hours than those of the set meals. We procured therefore platters, saucers, and dishes of wood, and cups of glass, for glass can be bought cheap at Venice, and beside these, cauldrons for boiling, and frying-pans.

Such foodstuffs we brought likewise with us as will keep well aboard ship, as spices, for example—pepper, saffron, ginger, mace, and cloves; bundles of dried figs also, rice and raisins, bacon, biscuit and cheese. Neither did we forget to procure cages for the safe-keeping of those hens and chickens as to which we had covenanted with the captain; store of millet seed likewise to feed them and keep

them in good case, and barrels for time of tempest to be sick in.

And now I will describe our galley to you even in her exact dimensions, and it shall be to you as though you saw her upon the waters.

She was fashioned of oak, with many bolts, chains, and irons stoutly and shrewdly bound together. Our mainmast goodly and strong, wrought of many beams, supports in fair weather the great mainsail, in foul the small square storm-sail. The mainsail and the great pennant floating from the mast-head in many a billowy fold, are both richly enwrought with the arms of our noble captain, Signor Augustine, and with the Lion of St Mark, his body tawny, his out-thrust tongue of scarlet. At the mast-head, immediately beneath that gracious pennant, is the crow's nest for the look-out or, if need be, for archers, slingers, or cross-bow men, and the total height of the mast is one hundred feet and seven.

The castle which, superbly gilt and sculptured, towers above our stern, contains three chambers, whereof the uppermost is provided with a handsome lattice window. Here stands the steersman at his tiller, here, too, he who watches the compass and informs him in a sort of crooning or chanty which way it points. Here likewise keep those wise men or astrologers who, versed extremely in the lore of the winds and stars, assist those others with their cunning and point the tall ship's pathway over the seas.

The middle chamber is the mess room of the captain and his noble companions. He dines simply yet with ceremony like a mighty lord. The call to dinner is by trumpet, and he has one to drink first of his cup and one other to partake before him of his dishes. The lowest chamber of the castle is the cabin for such noble ladies as may desire to

make this voyage. Here likewise are locked chests and coffers for pay and treasure. Above this poop also there is a sail.

A few paces from this stern-castle are cattle-pen and kitchen, both open to the sky. In the pen the animals kept for slaughter, as sheep, goats, calves, pigs, oxen, stand close together. So much for the stern-castle and what pertains to it.

Now for the prow. The prow has a special sail of its own, but of smaller size than the others, and a special crew are maintained to work it who rarely quit this part of the ship. The prow bears a ram as sharp as a razor. With this machine one may cleave the flanks of an enemy's vessel, or shear the oars off close to her side.

For well-nigh the full length of the galley, upon either side of it, run the benches whereon sit the galley-slaves three to an oar. A fourth man sits beside them, an archer, to see to it that they do not neglect to labour, or in case of mutiny to shoot them down. Of these galley-slaves we bore with us one hundred and eighty. These slaves are in general unmitigated ruffians, criminals condemned to the galleys for their crimes, but the case is not unknown when some poor wretches being reduced to penury, have given themselves to this way of living for sustenance. They work mostly bare to the waist and are cruelly beaten, even tortured, should the captain judge this measure expedient. When not at work they play at dice. They cook their own meat which I have seen them devour almost raw like savage creatures. Some, less degraded than their fellows, practise the mechanic arts and ply a trade. Such cobble up boots and shoes for a trifle of money or sew on a pilgrim's buttons. If a sea-captain believe that any of his slaves meditate flight, he will not suffer them to quit the ship, but while their

fellows go ashore for their recreation, he has those others chained to their oars. A sad life, and yet so strange are Nature's ways that I have seen these men at times wax exceeding merry. They sleep on the upper deck with no roof but the stars.

About the mainmast is an open space which stands in the same relation to a ship as a market-square does to a town. Here men forgather, drink, chaffer and pass the time of day. Hereabouts is the main hatch with the stairs leading down to our cabin, a spacious but disagreeable apartment, replete as any dungeon with fleas and odours, while the squealing of mice and rats is troublesome at night. The width of this cabin from side to side is thirty-nine feet. The entire length of the whole galley from stern to prow is one hundred feet and eighty-seven. And now I hope you will think that I have given you a very living and true portrait of our galley, for I have drawn her both in her general proportions and with much particularity of detail so that you may see her more clearly in your imaginations. You must picture us also in the costumes of our diverse countries and degrees, and as we clamber aboard from our gondolas, a host of knaves follow after us, bearing for money those bundles of commodities which we had purchased for this voyage in the market-place of Venice.

One of our number, a monk like myself, had neglected to purchase a pillow. They had built his berth up against the well of bilge-water and pump for the clearing of the same, and upon these discomforts he composed these verses :—

> " A sak of strawe were there ryght good,
> For som must lyg theym in theyre hood ;
> I had as lief be in the wood.
> Without mete or drynk ;

For when that we shall go to bedde
The pumpe was nygh our beddés hede,
A man were as good to be dede
As smell thereof the stynke ! "

All things being now in readiness and we aboard, our Signor Augustine gave order to trim his galley and depart, for this is a captain's office to state as a noble lord the thing that he will have done. But it is for the mate to see these orders carried out and to busy himself with the details of their execution, for the mate is most intimately versed in the science of navigation, of which science captains commonly know little or nothing.

The mate therefore caused our crow's nest to be nobly trimmed with a passing rich tapestry, and he caused eight silken banners enwrought with the captain's arms, the arms of the city of Venice, and those of diverse noble lords, pilgrims making this journey with us, to be displayed aloft above the stern-castle, where they made a most gallant showing. The sailors who at no time work silently, weigh anchor and spread sail with joyous shouts. Along the whole extent of the quay-side a multitude innumerable surge and throng. Their gusts of cheering come to us over the water, together with the God-speeds they rain upon us in many dialects and tongues. We, the pilgrims, as inspired by a single thought, vociferate that lusty psalm Te Deum. And now, as we bring our chanting to an end, our trumpeters and horn blowers, to the accompaniment of the kettles, blow strains so nobly inspiriting that you would have sworn that we purposed upon the instant to join battle. In this fashion therefore we bid farewell to the City upon the Waters, and depart from Venice in the name of God.

Now we had but journeyed three leagues when a vessel signalled to us, making sign as though she would parley.

So when we had drawn to within shouting distance, Augustine bade one call across to them and ask what they would with us. To which a brazen-throated fellow made answer: "Back," cries he, "to Venice, as you value your lives. The great Turk is laying siege to the island of Rhodes. The whole extent of the Ægean, Carpathian, and Malean seas is swarming with Turks!"

Thus in a moment of time did the sky cloud over for us, and we were now as dejected in soul as within this hour we had been exultant. A council was called of officers, and Augustine required my presence as spokesman and interpreter for my fellows. The conclusion they arrived at was that their galley would be allowed free passage by reason of the alliance between Venice and the Turks. Augustine put the position in the Venetian tongue to an officer who had learnt a sort of long-shore English from the trade in sugar, glass, perfumes, and spicery to the Port of London. His English I then delivered in Latin to the good understanding of all such amongst us as were lettered.

"The Turks," said the signor, "have proved true to this league in the past, and will, I doubt not, again. For ourselves therefore that are Venetians I anticipate no harm. But you pilgrims"—and his eye rested on me—"you are of course of many nationalities. The Turks may board. They may want to know more about you. They may *not like* you. Hi! Steward, fellow! A cup of Lachryma Christi!" The gist of this oracle I conveyed to my fellows who were gathered, pallid with fear, in their market-place about the mast. Some were for returning, but the more part overpersuaded them, and I recalled to them that clause in the covenant which we had drawn up between ourselves and Augustine, by which he had bound himself to be provided

amply with armament of war. This was in truth but a specious argument, for Signor Augustine would not have fought against an ally, but it passed unnoticed. "And in conclusion," cried I, "if we be to die, let it be with our faces towards Jerusalem!" And that majority which was for going forward at all hazards replied with a great shout: "On! On! Jerusalem! Jerusalem!" Then again did Signor Augustine bid me be his interpreter and to this effect:—

"I will take you," says he, "so far as to the island of Corfu. There lies our Lord High Admiral, whom we style 'The Captain of the Sea,' with the flower of the Venetian navy. He will advise us for the best, for by virtue of the league he has knowledge of all the doings of the Turks. I will be at his commands. But should ill befall you before you make Corfu, I will not hold myself responsible. Speak then, forward to Corfu, or back to Venice?"

And that majority that as before were for pushing forward through all chances, grasping the gist of what I had tried to make known unto them and interpreting amongst themselves into diverse tongues, made answer as before with a mighty voice: "On! On! Jerusalem! Jerusalem!" For we were aboard men of many nationalities—Danes, Dacians, Venetians, Franks, Gauls, Lombards, Englishmen, Irishmen, Hungarians, Scots, Bohemians, Spaniards, Flemings, Saxons, and Brabanters, bound all for the Sepulchre, and if thus at the very outset of our voyage we had been forced to turn back, it would have gone nigh I think to break our hearts.

But we continued our voyage, anchoring within three days in the port of Parenzo in the land of Istria, which is part of the kingdom of Dalmatia. Here we found all men in commotion. "The Turks," said they, "have spread over

the whole of the Adriatic, and they make a prey and spoil of all whom they encounter," and they made our hearts sick within us with tales of the Turkish cruelty, speaking as men will in panic, and doubtless not all to be taken for truth. But for all this we were not to be persuaded from our course, but headed right onward for Zara in Dalmatia, uncertain as ever men were as to what the morrow might bring forth.

Now when we came thither, a deadly silence overhung the town, so much so that we knew not what to make of it and hesitated to put ashore in the boats. While we were still in doubt there came one to the quay-side who, making a cup of his hands, called across the water to us, bidding us begone if we valued our lives, "for the plague," cried he, "is raging in every quarter of the city!" So we weighed anchor again and made for the open as though the Devil had been at our tails. We ran for the port of Lesina where we hoped to take in water, for our supply was now run very low. We had none to drink save such as was foul and stinking, and for the beasts none of any sort. Their moaning and whimpering were so constant as to resemble some weird sort of unhappy music, and we would see them of a morning licking from the planks and spars the dew which had gathered upon them during the night. The more need therefore to disembark at Lesina. But when we were already in the act of lowering the boats, a fair and fortunate wind sprang up of a sudden, and our astrologers advised our availing ourselves of it and departing instantly, for who dare neglect the wind?

And their wisdom was justified, for this wind having borne us rapidly forward for several hours dwindled to a calm, and we had to set the slaves to the oars, for we had now beside us a natural harbour, but uninhabited, amidst

lofty precipitous mountains of a deserted, rugged tract of the coast of Croatia.

And here a chance befell, trivial yet worth recounting, for our mariners took it for an evil omen. The first sight that met our eyes as we disembarked from the boats was the corpse of a drowned mariner washed up from the sea. Our superstitious slaves and seamen were terrified out of their wits, and led us all away to a many hundred yards' distance, nor would they so much as suffer me to send one to the galley for a spade that I might give that poor corpse Christian burial. We found, however, that of which we stood in need—water; a pretty, laughing streamlet leaping from the rocks. So we refreshed ourselves and our cattle and replenished the tanks.

And now to calm succeeded tempest, and contrary winds swept us back into the harbour so often as we attempted to put forth. Towards the evening of the third day the wind slackened, so we made the open at last, and within two hours we chanced to fall in with a war galley of Venice. Their captain summoned us, and greeting our Signor Augustine: "What befell you," said he, "at sea, yesterday or the day before?"

"Why," asked Augustine, "what should befall us? We met nothing save foul weather which drove us to shelter in a deserted creek amidst precipitous mountains. It is not shown upon my map—no doubt because, being uninhabited, my cartographer could discover no wenches there."

"Then," said that other captain, "praise God who conveyed you into that secret place. For these two days past this open sea has been swept by the whole fleet of the Turks who are making for Apulia to plunder the Christians." I could not let this pass without a twit for our superstitious

mariners. "You observe," I said to them, "what good luck your corpse has brought you!" At this they were savagely vexed.

Sailing steadily we came now unto Curzola in Illyria, a city of towers and pinnacles set upon a hill. Their walls were starkly fortified against the Turk, and ditches new dug, and their men of note most solemnly conjured us to return, but we would not listen.

From Curzola we reached Ragusa, and from Ragusa, Gazapolis. Beyond Gazapolis we passed a city whose name I cannot remember, though I have tormented my brains to recall it. This city, which we could see from our galley, was deserted, owing—so the mariners informed us—to the infectious breath of a dragon which haunted thereabouts. We showed wisdom, therefore, in attempting no landing in that pestiferous locality to be meat to so detestable a monster. This city, therefore, we left behind us.

When we were now at last within sight of the island of Corfu, our galley suddenly stood stock still, and this was our case. We had driven at unawares above a whirlpool which was slowly sucking us under. Our sailors strained every muscle but in vain, and had not two galleys put forth from Corfu to our rescue, we must all have been sucked under by the sea. But they lashed us to them, and both galleys starkly rowing, succeeded not without mighty labour in dragging us out.

At Corfu, having now achieved the first stage of our voyage, we were delighted beyond measure. We put away in the boats, and so many of us as were pilgrims, having hired a cottage from the islanders, built up a mighty fire for cooking, for we purposed to banquet there. The cottage, which was old, dry, and built with many wooden beams, caught fire, but we extinguished it, having no desire to pay

for a cottage in addition to a dinner. But it caught fire unhappily for the second time, and on this occasion the neighbours remarked our misadventure, for the flames were discernible above the roof.

The people of Corfu ran all together with an unmanly clamour, but with the help of ladders succeeded in extinguishing the flames. At this we were much relieved, for the folk of this island are an unreasoning and a passionate people, and might have revenged themselves upon us for the loss of their cottage. But all passed well.

Now Signor Augustine despatched a messenger to the Venetian Lord High Admiral, and having obtained his suit for audience, took me with him to put before him the requests and desires of the pilgrims.

"What do you require?" asked he.

"Signor," said I, "to be suffered to continue our voyage to Joppa."

"Joppa!" cried he. "What madness possesses you that you should expose yourselves to such risks to life and property, body and soul? Behold! The whole sea swarms with cruel Turks from whom there is no possibility of your escaping!"

I attempted to protest. "Madman!" cried he. "Signor Augustine, I shall detain your galley. In that ship at least they go no farther, for she is of the State of Venice and belongs to St Mark."

"Then, Signor," said I, "I hope we shall find money enough amongst us to hire another."

At these words he laughed, and turning from me tapped his forehead.

Now those amongst our pilgrims who had before proved chicken-hearted were so downcast by this action of the

Captain of the Sea in detaining our galley, that they hired ship that self-same night, and at the sunrising weighed anchor and departed away back for Venice. To justify their cowardice they spread lies through those countries where they came, to the effect that we others had without exception been slaughtered by the Turks.

These lies, spread abroad by many mouths, reached at last so far even as to my monastery in London, where the brethren with streaming eyes said requiem masses for my soul, at a time, perhaps, when I was comforting the body with a fat pullet and a flask of Croatian wine.

Now one of the elders amongst us, gathering us about him by the mainmast, addressed us thus: "Brethren," said he, "I know that this enterprise of ours will be regarded by almost all men as an act of simple foolhardiness, for we are putting forward at an hour when the Captain of the Sea, and all those who have knowledge of the matter, have conjured us to put back. Since then we incur these imminent perils with open eyes, let us put from us all disputes, oaths, blasphemies, and games at cards and dice. Let us, oh my brethren, call more frequently upon God and His Saints for aid, so that either we may be enabled to hack our way through the host of our enemies, or else, if we be to die, we may die Christianly."

To this proposition all gave assent, and of a truth this galley had borne but a faint resemblance to that of the well-disciplined monastery I had left behind me in London. Our pilgrims, through converse with the sailors, had learnt to garnish their discourse with oaths abominable. There had been much gluttony amongst us, and the Flemings and Saxons in particular had been wont to sit the entire day guzzling wine. Gambling had been used also, and for

heavy stakes, both day and night. Nor had disputes been lacking, for as the proverb says, "tot homines tot animi," we were many nationalities, and therefore the less likely to live for ever in amity. So much so indeed, that but a short hour before that elder's address, a Frenchman of the train of the Bishop of Orleans had struck with his fist a devout Swabian priest, thus incurring the lesser excommunication.

So we decided to put from us cards, dice, disputes, and blasphemies, but we did not put from us singing, nor the sweet airs of music, for we had with us those who could play to admiration flutes, serpents, lutes, clavichords, regals, and gitterns.

Now this same night we experienced a moment of panic terror, for while we stood about the mainmast, discussing one and all in loud voices our projects for this voyage, we discovered a strange boat alongside us in which were Turks, spies, standing in the dim light with straining ears to overhear our conversation. We at once betook ourselves to stones, which we hurled at them, but with astonishing nimbleness they glided from us and made their escape.

It was common talk here at Corfu that we should all be taken before we got to Modon, but we reached this town not only in safety, but without having seen the smallest boat upon the sea.

At Crete the entire city poured forth her population to greet us, many esteeming this for a miracle, that a Christian galley should have threaded her way unperceived through that world of war vessels of the great Turk, which they beheld daily cruising upon the sea in quest of booty. Over against our hostelry in Crete stood the Inn of the Turks from Constantinople. Let me record an act on the part

of these same Turks which proved them to be nowise deficient in the true spirit of chivalry. Although enemies declared, they joined their entreaties with those of the men of the island, and coming even to our doors, they would say, "You are lost, Christians, if you proceed farther."

The Duke of Candia also willing to do us a service, sent to us an orator of his court who, in as moving a Latin oration as ever was spoken, besought and conjured us to abide. "Between this Crete," said he, "and that Cyprus where you must take in supplies, lies Rhodes, which at this very hour and minute the Turks beleaguer. How think you then, save by miracle, to escape falling into this net?"

In Crete we delayed five days, and each successive day brought us worse news. So at the last we were at the end of our patience. A new galley was procured, and we weighed anchor for departing, but not until we had set in readiness our apparatus of war.

We had pots of peas for hurling upon the hatches, so that the feet of boarders might slip beneath them and precipitate them into the sea. We had no lack of spears, lances, bucklers, and shields. We bore long bows and cross-bows. We had great catapults, and slinging engines of diverse designs, and cannon procured at an huge cost, and mighty store of slinging stones and of stone cannon-balls. For we feared lest the wind, which was now becoming exceeding boisterous, might bear us into the very heart of the war fleet of the Turks, and we thought to die not like sheep but like men.

But it falls out not seldom that where men least fear danger, danger is nighest, and where men fear danger most, fortune intends them no evil, but even some signal good.

This was our case. The wind, which had been constantly increasing, blew at the last with hurricane violence. The ocean was lashed to fury, thunder pealed and crashed, and lightning stabbed the seas, forked and jagged. Caught in the teeth of the gale, we were carried with irresistible force and almost beyond control past the whole cluster of the Cyclades, of which Rhodes is the chief. No Turks, as I believe, perceived us, but had they done so they must still have been powerless to stay or grapple with us, swept forward as we were amidst the tumult with such vehement compulsion.

The wind calmed sufficiently for us to make Cyprus, and from Cyprus, Larnaca, which is the last port of call before the Holy Land is reached. And now a light, merry wind was bearing us forward, but so fast as a lady's saddle-horse will amble. The war fleet of the Turks was behind us like an ill dream forgotten, and no sound broke the silence save the plashing of the water about our prow, and the voice of the fellow within the stern-castle chanting the compass points to him who holds the tiller. For with a sort of crooning or chanty they use to converse the whole night through, the one giving the degrees, the other repeating the refrain, to show that he has heard correctly. And this tuneful murmur and strange kind of song disturbs no man's slumbers, but rather soothes than disquiets them, for it is with these singing men at sea, as with watchmen on land crying the hours in great cities, for then we feel that peace is protected and no ill stirring abroad.

So we remained till nightfall in our market-place about the mast, very merry, rejoicing, singing, and flute-playing, till the stars shone out and the moon rose clear over the waters. And the morning following, about the hour of sunrising, the look-out cried from the mast-head, and this

was his cry: "Pilgrims, my masters, rise up and come on deck. Behold! the land which you long to see is in sight!"

* * * * *

We neglected none of the Holy Places, but sought out, viewed and venerated all such relics as the shortness of time made anyway possible. But we had not covenanted with our captain for a visit of more than nine days, and this kept us ever astir, quitting place for place in a great hurry with the imminence of our departure forever in our minds.

From Joppa, where we disembarked, we journeyed to Rama upon asses, having spent the night of our disembarkation within a foul-smelling cave above the seabeach, for inn or tavern there was none. At Rama we were more fortunate, for here we lodged in a spacious building of vaulted chambers which gave upon a right noble court wherein splashed gaily a fountain of water.

This inn was purchased for the use of pilgrims by that stout soldier and nice patron of the fine arts, Duke Philip of Burgundy, surnamed 'The Good.' His face, my father who once saw him has described to me as the image of shrewdness. He it was who ruled the Netherlands with more than regal splendour, yet was he much of an original. When he appeared upon their heaths the peasants fled, for he coursed the stag not with staghounds, but with leopards. He was overmuch delighted with dwarfs and giants, of which kind of gentry numbers voyaged in his train. We pilgrims, who enjoyed the shelter of his splendid inn, agreed that the Duke well merited his appellation of 'The Good.' But some there were as ever, hypercritically punctilious, who declared that he should have forfeited that title by reason of his pronounced partiality for the transient enjoy-

ments of this fleeting existence: "For," said they, "of his two and thirty children, there was but one legitimate, and though he died piously, he died of drink."

Now the Principal of this Inn, who is called the 'Father Guardian,' pronounced a discourse in which he laid stress upon the necessity of our maintaining a correct demeanour during our visit. I recall some heads, amongst many, of his oration.

"Let pilgrims beware," said he, "of chipping off fragments from the Holy Sepulchre to bear away as keepsakes, for this is forbidden under pain of excommunication.

"Let not pilgrims of noble birth deface walls by writing their names, or drawing their coats of arms on them.

"Let no pilgrim give wine to a Saracen should the Saracen demand it, for a Saracen has no capacity for wine, for the law of the Prophet has forbidden him wine and so he has lost his capacity. And wine is productive of strange effects upon him, so that even after a single draught he will run stark mad, and the first man whom he attacks will be the pilgrim who gave it him.

"Let every pilgrim who thinks to ride from Jerusalem to that holy river Jordan, take hard-boiled eggs with him—he will find no shop by the road.

"Let every pilgrim in this country carefully guard his own property, for if he leave it about it will unaccountably vanish.

"Let no pilgrim bear a weapon with him, nay not so much as a dagger at his girdle; the Saracens will not suffer it.

"Let every pilgrim beware of gazing upon any Saracen woman whom he may chance to meet. For the Saracen husbands are no tolerant Catos but jealous to distraction, and they will be armed and the pilgrim not.

"Let no pilgrim have money dealings with a Saracen, except in such sort as he knows he cannot be cheated, for by cheating us they believe they are serving God.

"Let every Christian be upon his guard against the German Jews, for in this sort of pilfering and artful dealing they have less conscience even than the Saracens.

'But above all, let the pilgrim beware of the Eastern Christians, for they have no conscience at all, but are more surreptitiously, underhandedly, two-facedly, schemingly, intriguingly, cunningly, subtly and plausibly thievish and tricky than are the Saracens and the German Jews into the bargain."

Having delivered himself of these practical and paternal counsels, the Father Guardian, who was a cosmopolitan and man of the world, cleared his throat and withdrew to covenant with one for asses to bear us the next stage upon our journey.

Now as he departed there entered unto us itinerant merchants, Saracens, bearing all manner of dishes, and with these strangers we had money dealings, despite the oration we had that moment heard pronounced, for good counsel is thrown away upon men who have not breakfasted. So we purchased from them cooked milk, cooked fowls and chickens, puddings made of rice and flour cooked with milk, most excellent loaves of bread, sweet grapes, pomegranates, figs, lemons and water melons, dried figs, sweet water, and confections of sugar, almonds and dates, and of almonds and honey. So the merchants departed, the Father Guardian being still upon his quest for asses.

Now the sun beginning to grow hot, we retired to one of our vaulted chambers, and there while we were breakfasting, talking and laughing, we heard a sound as it were of one working with an iron tool at the far side of the chamber wall, for this inn stood not isolated but in a street of many fair buildings. So we were silent, wondering what this strange sound should betoken. At last

a hole was made by the taking out of a stone. And thus we learned that Saracen women are no less inquisitive than European, for upon the far side were Saracen women who had contrived this hole that they might see us through it.

At this I think we all smiled, and certain of the knights, and my friend who had composed those verses upon the discomforts of his berth beside the well and pump upon the galley, expressed admiration with sprightly pantomime. But the Father Guardian, entering at this moment, called lustily for mortar and had the hole sealed up. "If the Saracens discover you," said he, "conversing with their womenfolk, they will have no better taste than to offer you the alternative of death by torture, or of renouncing the faith."

When our short spell of nine days was at an end, we returned to our galley in worse plight than we had come, for whether it were the over-fatigue, the water we had drunk or the excessive heat of the sun, I cannot say, but many of us were sick with dysentery and diverse fevers. One of our knights expired the first day aboard, and a second went out of his mind and expired the second day in great pain, and with heart-rending screams.

Upon this return journey we decided to put ashore at Rhodes, the island past which we had formerly been driven by stress of weather, for we had learnt that the siege was raised and the Turks all departed. We approached the harbour about nine of the evening by the clear light of the moon. The sailors after their fashion were noisily trimming their sails, and we saw a great concourse thronging with torches to the harbour side.

"They will give us a noble welcome," said a gentleman beside me, "for, depend upon it, ours will be the first

Christian galley they will have seen since the siege, as the Turks have not long departed from about them." And now a great beacon blazed out upon a turret, and a second, a third, and a fourth upon diverse elevations upon the walls.

"A noble welcome," said my gentleman again, "for these Rhodians, whom I know of old, never do things by halves."

They welcomed us with a stone cannon-ball fired point blank, which piercing the wall of our stern-castle as though it had been cheese, carried away the legs of one of our astrologers. In great terror we also lit many lights and shouted to them not to hurt us for we were no Turks but Christian pilgrims, marked all with the sign of the cross. When they heard this they unslung their bows and turned away the slinging engines with which they had prepared to hurl stones at us.

"Who are ye? Whence come ye?" cried one from a tower. And one of our sailors bellowed back: "We are Venetians, and this galley belongs to St Mark," but the mate charging up struck this fellow in the mouth with his fist, breaking several of his teeth. For the Rhodians detest the Venetians, owing to their alliance with the Turks, and he feared lest this unthinking simpleton should poison our welcome.

Then Signor Augustine summoned another sailor. "Thou," said he, "thou seemest to be less of a calf's head, cry thus: 'This galley is a pilgrim galley from Joppa, with knights, lords, and priests aboard, all pilgrims returning from Jerusalem, and we purpose to sail to Italy.'" So this fellow shouted in this form of words, but whether it were the fault of that sailor who first shouted, or whether in very truth they still feared treachery, I know not, but they for-

bade us entrance into their harbour that night. So we anchored upon the seaward side of it, and much wave-tossed, slept there till morning.

At daybreak certain lords of Rhodes rowed out to us, to ascertain if we were of a truth that which we gave ourselves out to be. Having satisfied themselves, they suffered us to put out our boats, and we all rowed off together. So great a quantity of dead Turks floated upon the waters that our steersman steered with difficulty, threading his ways amidst them, and sometimes the nose of our boat would jolt against a corpse or corpses, which made this journey hateful and grisly.

We found Rhodes in terrible desolation. Our feet kept slipping upon Turkish arrows. Arrows projected from the timbers of buildings, while the cannon-balls yet lying about the ruinous streets and alleys, the Rhodians computed at upwards of eight thousand. All commodities were at famine price, so that for two starved fowls they charged me a ducat of Venice, but I thought it very necessary to diet myself, for dysentery was upon me and I began about this time to despair of my life.

So we were well content to be quit of Rhodes, and yet within two days there were few of us but would have paid a gross sum to be back within its walls. For upon that day at evening—being the feast of St Michael—the sea was fearfully convulsed, more than I had ever seen it during the whole course of my voyage. Many made vows of amendment, and those who had passed the evening of Michaelmas day in gluttony, vowed to spend it fasting for the rest of their lives.

The waves washed the length of the deck, all fire was extinguished, the kitchen was full of salt water, so that had we had a mind to eat we could not have done so, but we

had no stomach, being afflicted with vomiting and headaches. Furious winds caught us, tossing us aloft, violent squalls kept drenching us with water, striking the flanks of our galley as though mighty stones were being cast against her by giant engines. Thunder bellowed, all about us thunder-bolts fell, the sea seemed on fire.

No man could lie in his berth for the tossing, much less sit, and least of all stand upright. We were fain to cling to the pillars which, standing in the middle of the cabin, supported the superstructure. Others crouching, clung to lockers and chests, and these would ever and anon fling loose, with danger to life and limb through crushing.

Our galley was pitched within and without, and yet for all that the salt water kept creeping in through innumerable viewless chinks and crannies till our cabin was all awash. Our mainsail was torn to ribbons by the force of the tempest, and the storm-sail with which the sailors sought to replace it, was wrenched from their hands and caught upwards while yet but half attached, and one saw it blow out in the gale like a banner and bend the yard like a bow. At this the sailors and galley-slaves ran hither and thither, with such a wailing and lamentable outcry as though they were that instant to be subjected to some torture. Some strove to catch the sheet which lashed in the air. Others climbed the shrouds where we saw them aloft like little apes, striving to draw down the storm-sail to them, while those that were passengers and useless at these matters, called aloud upon God and the Saints. And as humorous thoughts will sometimes start into the mind even at some extreme crisis of our being, so now there flashed upon my brain a saying which I had read of the philosopher Anacharsis. For being asked by one that intended seafaring what ships were safest, he

made answer: "Those which lie on the beach, not those on the sea."

But in the midst of this terrible storm there came to us an unlooked-for help from Heaven. For there appeared a ray of fire of about a cubit in width which stood in the air for some time about our prow. Thence it moved slowly for the whole length of the galley so far as to the stern, there hovering above the stern-castle, vanished.

As soon as the officers and galley-slaves viewed this portent they ceased from their noise and shouting, and kneeling down with their hands raised to Heaven, they cried in a low voice nothing but "Holy! Holy! Holy!" But those of our number, and they were the more part of us, who were below hatches, clinging to the pillars and lockers, thought from the sudden silence and unwonted prayer that our last hour was come, and that the sailors had given over work in despair. But one of the sailors running to the main hatch opened it and called to those beneath: "Pilgrims, my masters, fear nothing, for this night and in this storm we have received help from Heaven."

But yet for all this, within an hour we were in worse plight than ever we were. For in this turmoil and darkness of the pitchy night we had drawn near without knowing it to a steep-up coast of precipitous rocks. Now there were under hatches in the hold two bishops who had sent their servants up on deck, and these servants running to the main hatchway, opened it and called lustily: "My lords, come up on deck. The galley is a wreck and sinking!"

Those therefore which were in the cabin left their manhood a little unthought on, and fought their passage up the companion-way like savage beasts. But Signor Augustine

and his officers had already cut the ropes of all the boats with their swords letting them fall into the sea, in order that Augustine himself, his brother, his brother's wife, and his officers might be the first to make their escape. This showed the agile wit of that ingenuous signor our captain, who at our first coming aboard had regaled us so courteously with his Cretan wine and Alexandrian comfits, and who had feigned to blush like a young girl at the compliments I paid him in an after-dinner speech of which in truth he understood not one word in ten.

But again Heaven saved us, for the vessel righted herself so that we were spared a scene of horror. For in such cases many leap down, crushing those who are already in the boats, and the great lords and their retainers draw their swords and hack off the fingers and hands of poor men who cling to the oars and sides of the boats, and they stab with their swords those simpler men who would leap into the boats before them.

But, as I say, we were spared this piteous spectacle, for the wind veering suddenly righted our galley so that the seamen moored her to those very rocks whereon but now we were in such imminent hazard of breaking up, and this done, they furled sail and cast anchor.

And now, the mate giving them example, the sailors and officers began inhumanly scourging the galley-slaves with rods, declaring that it was by their carelessness that we had incurred this peril. Whether this were so in truth, or but a feigned tale to save their faces, I cannot say, but we pilgrims, interceding hardily for these poor wretches, succeeded somewhat in abridging their sufferings. For there seemed to us to be something beast-like in showing no mercy where the mercy divine had but this moment snatched us all from a hideous death.

So at the last, after many chances and freaks of fortune both good and bad, we again reached Venice, where we broke up our company into smaller companies, bade each other farewell, and so departed by many roads, through many lands, each man to his own home.

# CHAPTER IV

## *Anne Boleyn and the London of Henry VIII.*

LONDON IN 1543, SHOWING ST PAUL'S WITH ITS SPIRE (BURNED IN 1561)

*(From an engraving after a drawing by A. van den Wyngrerde, 1543, in the Bodleian Library)*

## *Anne Boleyn and the London of Henry VIII.*

AN IMAGINARY epistle from Sir Thomas Wyatt, the poet, to his friend Anthony Wyndygate, studying Greek at the University of Padua.

* * * * *

Dear fellow-poet,

You reproach me in your last for giving you no news of Court. How fleet we our days? What new ballads doth the King compose? What limbs are broken in the tilt ring? What new beauties cause our hearts to flutter? And must I play Briareus of the hundred hands to feed my Hydra of the hundred mouths with titbits of news? I must, it seems, do so, or we shall never part friends.

Know then that a new beauty *has* arisen amongst us, the incomparable lady Anne Boleyn, and that I stand high in the lady's good esteem. To describe her at a word, she is the sole Phœnix upon the Arabian tree. This should give you a very comprehensive idea of her, but since you Greek scholars want all so clipped and concrete, I will give you, not indeed a Parian marble, but a painting after Hans Holbein or John Van Eyck.

Her eyes are brown and sparkling, their eyebrows being highly arched and so fine as to appear to be pencilled. Her nose is long but fine, the mouth extremely small, and the curve of the lips, I think, accentuated with paint. Her hair is of a light chestnut and grows (Oh! my Anthony!) with the most astonishing luxuriance, reaching positively to

within four inches of the knee. How know I this? Peace, satyr, she wears it thus publicly and on all occasions, ever at full length, for Anne is none of those who go about to conceal their lights under bushels, and thus pendent she tricks it out with her richest gems.

To the heightened colour and shapely figure of this little Anne Boleyn is added all the sparkle and resilience of youth. There are ladies at Court who can boast a more transparent complexion, but her play of expression is extraordinary, and her vivacity as captivating as lively music.

She has a slight malformation of one finger-nail and of this she is uncomfortably sensitive, so that she has acquired a trick of concealing it beneath the tip of one of her other fingers. I mention this, my dear fellow-poet, because you must know that I am one of those few remaining lovers of a tenderer and truer age (when knights were not created for their money and lands, but for indiscriminate homicide in woods and deserts), and like the Gawaynes and Tristrams of that golden time, I can dote upon a mistress for her very defects. And then when you look at her hand and the fingers held so quaintly, you notice for the first time, perhaps, how exquisitely it is moulded, so that upon second thoughts I will not allow the finger-nail for a defect at all.

For the most part she goes habited in a costume of black silk trimmed with pearl and gold, and with a coif of like fashion upon her head. She wears two necklaces, the one of gold, the other of great pearls, with a capital "B" in gold which she wears as a pendant to express their family name of "Boleyn." She had three necklaces the day before yesterday, but I have had one away for a keepsake. This is how that happened.

You must know I wrote her some lines which she found excellent, for an appreciation of my verses is not the least of her many charms. These are they :—

" A face that should content me wonderous well
Should not be faire, but lovely to behold :
Of lively loke, all griefe for to repel
With right good grace, so would I that it should
Speak, without words, such words as none can tell ;
Her tress also should be of crispéd gold. . . ."

The ' lively loke ' is happy phrasing. I know none livelier, but the ' crispéd gold ' I put in to please her, if one does not flatter one is lost, in the full blaze of sunlight perhaps—but no, I will not excuse myself. The colour, as I told you, is a light chestnut, and it went against my conscience as an artist to pen so frantic a misstatement.

I went on to say—which is truth itself and so makes amends—that I could be content to be ' knit ' with her in

" The knot that should not slide."

To this last line Anne objected that great wits had often short memories, that I could not be knit in such a knot until I had first been unknit, that I was already married, and had been for ten years, and so forth.

There you have a wonderful example of the materialism of a woman's mind. They are confined as closely within the realms of mere fact as the basest mechanic. I had never thought of marrying the wench, and the ' knot ' I spoke of was one which would not ' slide ' I hoped for a very long time, but which *would* sooner or later as a matter of course, and doubtless to both our contents.

Still my lines did not go unrewarded, for she gave me, or rather suffered me to take which comes to the same thing, the necklace to which were attached her writing tablets.

And she said that this would give me an excuse to speak more verses to her under the pretence of returning her trinket. I hung the necklace about my neck and stuffed the tablets under my beard beneath my doublet. I had but just accomplished this delicate operation when the King came upon us talking together there within an oriel window.

What the King's intentions may be with regard to me I know not, but of late he has taken to dogging me like a shadow—a capacious shadow such as might be cast by a windmill. I am apprehensive what may follow, having but one neck, and whenever he comes upon me as he does now at all hours, I fall covertly to crossing myself or murmuring an Ave Mary. . . .

[Later.]

The mystery of the King's dogging me has come to light and *absit omen* ! We were playing bowls upon the green, the King, myself, several courtiers more. The King threw a ridiculous cast, his bowl rolling to a good yard and a half beyond the jack. He then claimed the cast as his. The courtiers wondering whether or no he had gone completely mad, said that " by his leave they thought not," whereupon he turns to me and says very positively, " Wyatt, I tell thee, it is mine ! "

I now saw what he wished to convey in that elephantine style of which he is so accomplished a master. He was pointing to his bowl with his little finger on which I now saw, with no little mortification, that he had jammed Anne Boleyn's diamond ring. But I was not going to let him carry it off so. Wherefore, at considerable personal hazard, I ventured upon reprisals. The courtiers still believed that the sole question in debate was the distance of the King's

bowl from the jack. I stared dumbly at Anne's finger ring and then had an inspiration.

"And if it may like your Majesty," I replied, "to give me leave to measure the cast, I hope it will be mine," and with that I plucked out Anne's necklace from about my neck and proceeded to take measurements. When the King saw the necklace and realised that I had had a gift of Anne before ever he had, his consternation was such as to make him altogether ludicrous. He spurned the bowl away from him, and almost bellowing "But then am I deceived!" broke up the game and decamped; the other courtiers looking each at other in dumb amazement, and all privately convinced in their own minds that the King had taken leave of his senses.

But I must walk warily, passing warily now for some time, for if you lose your head to a lady, your body may with good hap accompany it; but if you lose your head to King Henry, you will not triumph over him unless you are St Denis, who carried his head after execution as a watchman carries his lantern, to the great admiration and astonishment of the pious folks in the country where he lived.

[A month later.]

Henry is completely bewitched by our little Anne, between whom and Queen Katharine there is war to the knife. Cupid has scored a bull, his shaft has so completely transfixed the royal stomach that the feathers are lodged in Henry's backbone. Queen Katharine attempts to have Anne away from him by summoning her to interminable games at cards in her private chamber. But if Henry follows his new flame thither and insists on making one at the game, what then?

Well, from the Queen's point of view, there is pith in the scheme yet. For how can Anne cut, shuffle, or deal the

cards without displaying to her disadvantage that unfortunate malformation of the finger-nail which ordinarily she is so diligent to conceal? Henry has in full measure the pagan joy in form and colour, but the soul is not a commodity by which he sets much stock. He is quick to conceive disgust, and the devil of disgust once raised in him, no necromancer can lay it again. That little finger may yet be the ruin of Anne's hopes, for Katharine, who has been his queen now for eighteen years and over, has had time to study her man.

Anne retaliates, you may be sure. She has youth on her side, that youth of the miracle play whose arm was as a hazel stick; invincible youth, a surer ally than a legion of Swiss mercenaries or so many devils. She is possessed furthermore of every weapon with which the finished coquette can either strike or parry. I am not admitted to these card parties—as you will readily imagine after the incident of the bowling-green — but particulars leak out none the less.

If in the course of the play Anne turns up the king—above all if it be the king of hearts—she holds the card in so tender a fashion that it is almost a caress, and she glances at Harry all the while after a peculiar recipe of her own, so that he is with difficulty restrained from throwing his arms there and then about her neck.

You may be quite sure that none of this by-play is lost upon the Queen. "My lady Anne, you are not like the others, you will have all—or none," she exclaimed last night in a cold fury.

Did you ever see Queen Katharine? I think not, for she never travelled to Windsor while you were dwelling there. Well, she is no longer in the holiday time of her beauty, but she still possesses graces that captivate the eye. Her hair is

the true Spanish black, dark as midnight but not rich, not lustrous. Her eyes are of the deepest blue; the pupils jet black. You will say that the pupil of every eye is so, but it is not in all cases so noticeable. These eyes haunt you and redeem a face that would otherwise be heavy and dogmatic. She does not lack dignity, but her neck is too thick and her whole person of late too inclining to fat. . . .

The Court begin to form parties. Those hold with Katharine who fear a breach with Spain or with the Pope. The Lutherans hold with Anne and so do Wolsey's enemies—the Cardinal's arrogance having left him hardly a friend in the world. You will ask me why those lean to Anne who detest the Cardinal. Anne, you must know, was secretly contracted to Percy at the very time when she was applauding my verses. This secret came to Wolsey's ears, and the Cardinal acting, I suppose, by the King's private orders, promptly annulled the contract. His enemies, of whom many are actuated by the meanest envy and jealousy, are determined to pluck the Cardinal down, for they suppose, and with reason I fancy, that she still bears him a grudge upon the old score. They are scrupulous however of appearances, and to outward seeming the relations between them are cordial enough. Anne sends the Cardinal loving greetings in postscripts to the King's letters, and he, upon his part, has sent her a ring charmed against the sweating sickness. It's all very amusing. . . .

The party of Katharine have to-day played a rather ghastly trick upon Anne with a book of ancient prophecy, which seems to me to be at least as likely a forgery. There is an illumination in this precious work which represents three figures marked respectively "H," "K," and "A," the figure labelled "A" being portrayed *without a head*. Katharine sends for a prophet to expound the mystery. He turns up,

punctual as you like, a lean, bearded rogue of the usual stamp. They believe, or at least the ladies believe, that he is a perfect adept in the black art, but, personally, I think neither more nor less than that he is a spy of Katharine's.

Be that as it may, he takes the book into his bony hands, and then with looks of terror, which if not real were certainly astonishingly well counterfeited, interprets the three figures by the King and the two ladies—" K " Katharine, " H " Henry, and " A "—the headless " A "—our wretched Anne. The prophet has pronounced her assured destruction if she marry the King. The book, that it might the more affect her nerves, they afterwards conveyed into her bedchamber.

" Come hither, Nan," she cried to her favourite gentlewoman, " see here a book of prophecy ; ' this,' he saith, ' is the King,' this the Queen mourning and wringing her hands, and this is myself with my head off ! "

" Madame," her gentlewoman made answer, " if I thought it true, though he were an emperor, I would not have him with that condition."

To which Anne answered again : " For the hope I have that the realm may be happy by my issue, I am resolved to have him whatsoever may become of me."

I had this conversation of one that heard it, at the price of certain ribbons. Anne's reason, as stated to her gentlewoman, for determining to win the King, namely that her children yet unborn may at some vague future date make England happy, I learned with some amusement. I never yet heard of a woman who captured her man, or routed her rival, except from some motive of delicate, deep-seated philanthropy, or sheer unadulterated altruism. " I am resolved to have him whatsoever may become of me," those

you may be sure are her true sentiments without the trimmings. Well, I wish her luck of her prize. . . .

[Later.]

You will know by the time this letter reaches you that the Pope has refused to grant Henry his divorce, that Wolsey for not having persuaded him to better purpose is likely to be cast away, and that the King is applying to the Universities to obtain a decision suited to his mind. Your University of Padua is to give its decision along with the rest. How is your University chest? Empty? I imagine so. It is their normal state. Henry is preposterously wealthy, so I have no doubt your learned doctors will pronounce judgment in entire accordance with his views. . . .

[Later.]

The wretched Katharine has again appealed to the Pope, who has sent a curse which curses the King and this whole realm of England. The curse, neatly written in good clerkly hand upon a fair parchment to which the papal seal was duly attached, was despatched away by an envoy extraordinary to us here in London. But the awful dignity of these proceedings was marred not a little by the excessive caution of the envoy himself. He knows the touching personal loyalty of the King's executioners, the blithe, contented spirit in which they enter upon the labours of the day, and he had no desire for a personal interview with Henry with nothing but a parchment roll cursing him by way of a letter of recommendation.

So he set up the curse, not on the gates of St Paul's as his commission was, but somewhere in the town of Dunkirk in Flanders. This was funny enough, but the whole affair took on the aspect of broad farce a moment afterwards.

For the curse had no sooner been nailed up with all due pomp and ceremony when it was taken down again by an honest, indignant British tradesman, a London mercer named William Locke, who put it in his pocket and walked off with it, and so the whole affair even amongst the serious turns to laughter. . . .

The crash has come. Queen Katharine is to be Queen no more. She is to be entitled only 'Princess Dowager,' and must decamp forthwith and leave the field to Anne. She remains in possession of her head and an enviable pension. I am sorry for her, poor lady, but I cannot bring myself to wish Anne less than a golden fortune, you know what a flame of mine she was, though truly the wench treated me abominably! . . .

We are all putting ourselves in festival array. The King is lavish of his money as a schoolboy on the first day of term. If ever he has an heir I suppose the gentleman will be born bankrupt. He does nothing but despatch gallopers with epistles which have to do with pageants. The Lord Mayor has convoked a special City Council to determine the form which the rejoicings are to assume. The barges of the City Companies are to be trimmed out not merely with their ordinary banners, but with all those which hang in the Companies' Halls, and with a world of scutcheons new furbished and painted. At a word, no detail is to be neglected towards the celebration of so noble a triumph. . . .

* * * * *

The morning of the great day dawns sunny and clear as heart could wish. The Companies are to escort Anne by water from Greenwich to the Tower. . . .

What have you, my friend, in Padua to compare with Spring in London? Though London be little, I tell you it

is a jewel. The marsh of Moorfields washes the City Wall upon the east, and at this season our London girls go with baskets thither for flowers and bring them back brimming over with water-marigolds. The sweet May breeze blows in at our lattices to wake us from our dreams to a world lovelier than they. It brings us the perfumes of those countless spring-flowers which star the meadows of Ratcliff, Stepney, Bednall Green, and Shooter's Hill, where the King rides a-Maying. Lush meadow-lands encircle us everywhere about with a belt of greenery, and you may hear the song of singing-birds in the very heart of the City. The cherry-trees are in bloom in our merchants' closes, and roses and the honeysuckle contribute their intoxicating fragrance from the gardens of the Strand. Thames, like a pagan god rejuvenated, shakes sapphire and crystal from his locks, and his infant sea-horses sport and frolic as though upon some haunted water of the poets. What have you, my friend, in Padua to compare with Spring in London?

Shall I give you some brief account of Anne's progress by water? It is the talk of the moment with us so you shall have it. The Lord Mayor and the City Fathers take the water at the new stair by St Mary Hill, and set forth in their procession with fifty barges. I make no mention of lesser craft. Anne meets them at Greenwich, attired in a rich costume of jewels and cloth-of-gold, and straightway the citizens set forward in their order, the minstrels continually playing.

The Lord Mayor's barge into which Anne is received is covered gondola-fashion with a rich awning; it has, of course, its full array of banners, streamers, scutcheons, and its contingent of gaily-clad minstrels and singing-boys. The barge of the City Company of the Batchelors is the one of all which she most commends.

The 'Batchelors' carry trumpets besides their shalms

and sackbuts. Bells at the tips of all their streamers maintain a perpetual tinkling, and their streamers flash, unfold, flicker in the bright air like flames. Precious stuffs are to-day of no account. This galley which Anne so praises they have draped, decks, sail-yards, and topcastle, with silk and cloth-of-gold. Has my Lord Mayor discovered the Philosopher's Stone? Is it Anne Boleyn or King Solomon whom we convey from Greenwich to the Tower?

One galley has set up in Anne's honour her heraldic device of the White Falcon. The bird has a golden tree to perch on, filled all with blossoms of white and crimson silk, and which appears to grow upon the crest of a green hillock built high above the vessel's decks. Upon this mound a world of pretty maidens habited as nymphs lie harp-playing or singing.

Nor is the element of the grotesque, dear to the populace, forgotten. Upon the vessel before Anne's barge the roaring of cannon draws all eyes upon a stupendous dragon, which moved by some unseen agency writhes his coils or raises his obscene head to vomit flame, while all about him wild woodmen and misshapen creatures of fantastic shape throw balls of fire and make hideous noises.

At the Tower, Anne beckons for silence, and thanks the citizens in a pretty speech from the top of the wall by the western water stairs. And then the Lord Chamberlain receives her in with such a salvo from the guns that I thought it had split my ear-drums. And now I hear that we have had one gentleman drowned through his vessel's splitting amidships, through the weight of a Hill of the Muses which had been built upon it, while another has been accidentally slaughtered by a cannon. So you see we are all very gay and vivacious and convivial. . . .

Night sinks on London, a deep violet night bright with

stars. It is broken only by the cries of the owls, the half-audible refrain of a far-distant tavern song, and the voice of some disputatious wassailer expounding the enigma of the universe to a Beefeater who has no talent for metaphysics. These sounds mingle strangely with my dreams, and to them there is presently added the clink, clink, clink of hammers; carpenters and mechanics are adding the finishing touches to platforms for spectators, artificial mounts, and wine-spurting fountains.

Picture me the next morning picking my way along Cheapside. You know what a shrinking primrose I am, and how I shun the obtrusive glances of the vulgar? I wear my crimson and gold bonnet with diamond clasp and ostrich feather, my gold necklace with a pretty, pleasing bauble at the end on't, and my brocaded gold and crimson doublet which shows the darker hues through the slashings. Crimson trunk hose of course, and the shoes with the jewels. My long sword goes clank-clank-clank upon the cobbles. My tailor, who has padded out my shoulders till I resemble Atlas, has a pretty thought. Lest I should cut too drab a figure, he has removed the older tassel which used to hang by my dagger, and has replaced it by one after the newer mode. It is all of gold thread and thick and bushy as a horse's tail.

The press augments from one moment to another. Lusty young watchmen arrayed against the day in gala attire of silks and velvets march everywhere with long staves, and keep a mighty coil repressing refractory individuals who will not leave the fairway open for Anne and her company.

At last the tavern-sign I am seeking catches my eye, a kneeling angel and a standing Mary. This is the 'Salutation Inn,' and I hasten upstairs to my corner of the little flat roof above the oriel windows. Secure in the possession of my

seat, I lean over the balustrade and scrutinise the nape of the neck of a gargoyle which thrusts forth below. The expression of his countenance is hidden from me, but I suspect him of leering cynically upon the multitude whose roar and rumble rise all about my ears.

Friend Anthony, have you ever beheld Cheapside, the golden Cheap of the merchant princes of our fat Henry VIII. and his little Anne? But I remember you have not, for your town was always Windsor until you became Greek-bitten and posted away to Padua. I will attempt to picture it for you as I see it from my balcony.

Below me to my right swings the sign of the 'Bell,' to my left that of the 'Three Crowns.' They have draped the 'Bell' with crimson, and the 'Crowns' with Orient carpets, but my inn, the 'Salutation,' is the gayest of the three, for it shines with innumerable sheets of blue silk striped slantwise with cloth-of-gold.

There confronts me across the street as gay a building as poet could wish to see. The ground floor is given over to tiny shops now partially concealed beneath tapestries of hawking and hunting, the corners of which the wind keeps raising and then letting fall again. An open arcade which gives upon the street runs the whole length of the building, and is full now to overflowing with ladies and gentlemen in their richest attire. Above this story rise battlements, and upon its high-peaked roof of dormer windows, gilt weathervanes turn in the breeze and heraldic creatures with patient forepaws fondle scutcheons.

Against this building to the right stands Bow Church tower, surmounted by a crown of open lanterns a-flutter with streamers. To the right again beyond the tower I can count so many as ten gables from the corner where I sit. This is 'Goldsmith's Row,' as superb a line of shops as

surely all Europe has to show. Penthouse roofs protect the open shop fronts from the weather. The timbers are of antique oak for they date from the days of Harry V. and his French wars. The lattice windows are innumerable and the chimneys above the aged roof of weathered red tile are twisted and sculptured. But it is the carved work that most captivates and excites the imagination. Painted scutcheons appear to be countless, and there is a world of sculptured wild men who bestride fantastic monsters. Every shop of the ten is enriched with so great a variety of carvings, picked out with such a wealth of paint and gilding, as to give the whole row something the air of a gigantic reliquary or jewel casket. They have draped the shops against Anne's coming with their Arras and scarlet, their cloth-of-tissue, cloth-of-silver, and cloth-of-gold, but the 'Row' is so naturally rich in colour that to conceal any portion of it seems almost a pity.

In the street centre, a stone's throw from where I sit, rises the conduit, a fountain of some forty feet in height, which supplies the serving-wenches of this gay locality with water to fill their pitchers of a morning. It is surmounted by an angel in lead gilt blowing a trumpet, and in a little cupola beneath him I can distinguish the pied coats of minstrels who begin now upon the sudden to play and sing with a very good ear.

Down street to my left, a second fountain runs wine, or will do when two sweating mechanics have it in trim. Now it begins with a mighty spurt! But the velvet watchmen are to hold back the mob from it until Anne has passed with her retinue. Otherwise we shall have beggars, carters, serving-wenches, wagoners, ploughboys, lying in great routs and heaps immovable through drunkenness. They love by this solemn symbolic gesture to make public demonstra-

tion of their loyalty, and lie prone upon the cobbles to the glory of God and the King. But they impede a cavalcade.

The fountain spurts now gaily and regularly. A florid peasant views the phenomenon with *thirst* printed legibly upon every line of his countenance. He receives a prod in the stomach from an apprehensive watchman with his pole, and utters a howl of agony. He becomes in consequence the butt of sundry unprintable jests. The multitude has had time to become exceedingly jocose.

I glance up street once more, for a distant thunder of cheering warns me that the cavalcade has taken the road though the vanguard will not be in sight yet for many minutes. At the far end of Cheap, a fitting background to this street of marvels, one beholds with wonder the monumental sublimity of Paul's. Its spire, the loftiest in creation, soars heavenward, and my eyes dazzle as I seek more clearly to distinguish that weathercock turning above the world. The rose window of the great West End stands right over against me. It takes the fires of morning and glimmers, a jewel of many dyes.

You will not expect me, my dear friend, to enumerate or particularise for you the Countesses and Dukes, the gentlewomen and ambassadors who took part in this progress? You are not interested, are you, in Bishops? Suffice it to say that the procession reached us much upon time, that all such personages were plentiful as may-flies above a pool, and that their attires were worthy of the street they marched through, that is to say, they were of such hues as by comparison to render the peacock sombre, the bird of paradise downright melancholy.

But I will say a word of Anne, for they brought her to a halt right before my window, at which point it had been determined that the City Recorder, Baker, should present

her with a purse. Between ourselves I had been advertised of this beforehand, which was my reason for securing my seat where I did.

Beneath a canopy of yellow cloth-of-gold which sixteen of her gentlemen take turns in supporting, she sits in an open litter drawn by milk-white horses. These horses, trapped in white damask to the very cobbles, are led gently forward by her grooms. She is sitting in her hair, literally in it; I have told you with what luxuriance it grows, and certain tresses which have strayed into her lap she twines caressingly about her fingers. About her head she wears a coif, with a single circlet of gems. Her surcoat is of white cloth-of-tissue; her mantle furred with ermine.

Master Baker, with a low reverence, presents his purse and expresses the loving wishes of the citizens. Anne thanks him amidst a general hush, but I cannot, from where I am sitting, distinguish the words. The excitement of her progress has heightened her colour, and her look, always animated, to-day is radiant. Master Baker retires, and the procession sets forward anew.

I can give you but an abridged account of the numberless pageants and mummeries devised in her honour. We Londoners have the knack of such things. But my epistles are grown to near the length of a journal, and you may be apprehensive I intend favouring you with a volume in folio.

Briefly, then, our Anne is berhymed, or sung to, or presented gifts by a poet, Apollo, Calliope, and the Muses, by Juno, Pallas, Mercury, and two angels, by the children of Paul's school disguised as bearded merchants, and by the Four Cardinal Virtues, and Venus, and the family of St Anne.

The rear-guard of Anne's escort is still winding slowly out of Cheap when the rail which pens in the multitude bursts outwards, and a solid phalanx precipitates itself upon the

wine fountain. The florid peasant whom I have already mentioned to you, first achieves the goal, outdistancing the others with a bound worthy of a mountain goat. I am so taken with the fellow's agility that I fling him an angel, but his beak is already steeped in the liquor, and 'tis another vagabond appropriates my coin.

Of the banquet which they give Anne at Westminster I can tell you something, for my son, young Thomas, was deputed to present her washing bowl, and he furnishes me with some pleasant particulars. But what do they think to do, and whither are they leading us? To see the luxury of the age! It o'erflows like the Nile and can lead, one would imagine, to but one end, the bankruptcy of the realm. They have set themselves, I think, to outdo all that one reads of feasting in the old romancers.

The buffet is an erection of twelve stages, furnished forth with plate of rare workmanship of bullion gold, and all things corresponding thereto for magnificence. At the first course the guests are served with thirteen dishes per head, and to a flourish upon the trumpets, they set for adornments upon the board the pieces in chess of huge size wrought in spice bread, and galleys of war complete to the last rope and spar, in gilded wax and pastry. There are castles also of like fashion, with pleasances about them and knights tilting and pleasances of sugar work with ladies dancing.

At the second course they set Anne four-and-twenty dishes, at the third course, thirty. Nor need the Lord Mayor and his brethren complain that they are starved if they have but three-and-thirty dishes at two courses. Let churls die of hunger, an apoplexy was ever more polite.

The Duke of Suffolk, as Lord High Steward of England, and the Lord William Howard, as deputy Earl-marshal, mounted upon their great horses, prance everywhere about

the hall, heartening and animating the guests. My son, who begins already to have an eye for a pretty woman, and to take note of such matters, much commends Anne's delicacy in the matter of spitting. She had the Countesses of Oxford and of Worcester to stand one at either side of her throughout the four hours of the repast, that they might raise a fair cloth before her face when it pleased her to spit. She loves not to spit more public at a dinner where there is assembled so great a quantity of men. I have told you, friend Anthony, have I not, that Anne Boleyn's coquetry is a finished masterpiece?

Two gentlewomen, as the custom is, sit at Anne's feet throughout the banquet, under the table. The Viscount Lisle, as Pantler, tastes first of Anne's dishes, and the Earl of Sussex, as Sewer, of her cup. Mr Rose, as Marshal of the Hall, kisses the towel with which she will wipe her lips, and my boy Thomas, as Chief Eurer, drinks of the washing water. Thus they demonstrate to general satisfaction that no traitor has mingled poison in the sauces, or in the washing water, or the wine, or in the fibres of the towel, or those three gallant gentlemen and young Thomas to boot must have been seized with horrible gripings or have incontinently fallen dead.

> [The intermediate correspondence being suppressed to assure continuity, there follow extracts from letters despatched near three years after.]

So far it has fared with Anne as with some legendary maiden, who playing alone beside the ocean comes at unawares upon a sea-horse sunning himself. He is captivated by this pretty mortal, mounts her upon his back, and bears her for his disport through the flashing foam of his kingdom into echoing grottos and beneath arches of rainbows. But

in sea-horses there is no heart, and now growing weary of his lovely burden, he plunges suddenly beneath the surface and overwhelms her in the waves. . . .

Within three months it was patent to us all that Anne had no more to hope from the King's goodwill. And now? A handkerchief thrown by her to some champion in the lists gives Henry the pretext he is seeking. He departs upon the instant—alone, and Anne finds herself the focus of every eye. Amongst all that throng of spectators there is no one but foresees the next move in the game, and no one but is prepared to swear he sees it not.

The prophecy hidden in the little illuminations of the three figures "K," "H," and "A" proves true at the last. Perhaps I should take back my words. I supposed that ill-boding wizard a mere creature of the Princess Dowager Katharine. It would seem to-day that he was a true exponent of these unholy mysteries. . . .

In a closed chamber of the Tower, Anne has been tried before twenty-nine judges of her peers. The rumour is everywhere abroad that she cleared herself of every charge objected against her. The verdict none the less is guilty. One must not examine too curiously the justice of our day.

Friend Anthony, this is horrible. You write much to me of your subtle Italians, of dances and knives beneath the cloaks, of banquets where the cook is in league with the apothecary. But with Anne there will perish to-morrow Sir Francis Weston of the Privy Council, Norris, the Groom of the Stole, that hapless Smeaton, the master who taught Anne to play upon the virginals and who lies now in prison loaded with irons, and Anne's own brother, Lord Rochford, whom Henry so late ennobled.

Is the tenure of life more secure at our Court, think you, than in some of your Italian cities? Why, where your Italian

slays one man by contrivance, our King destroys a family, uproots a faction. Your Italian destroys by poison so that Court physicians may explain away a death by the plague, or the sweating sickness. Our Henry, our frank yet covert Henry, destroys more quaintly. He kills by form of law, a method surer than poison and more seeming-open, and the blame, where blame is, falls not upon himself but his ministers. He swore once in my hearing that " if his cap knew his counsel he would pluck it from his head, and cast it into the fire to burn." This is your ' bluff Harry,' the open, the honest, the idol of the common people. My friend, he is infinitely subtle, and his Court whisperers put in jeopardy the lives of the noblest amongst us. The Cardinal and Sir Thomas More were his ministers, yes, but they were also his friends and boon companions. He has played in charades before Wolsey, was his guest I know not how often, drank with him, diced with him. He would walk in More's garden at Chelsea with his arm about his neck. Where are they to-day, the one or the other ?

And while the King masques, or leads the dance, or plays and sings to the harp, at which exercise it pleases him to fancy that he resembles David, his drinking companion of the night before may be haled thence to be murdered in the Tower, or hanged openly upon a gallows, always by ' form of law.' All is but a turn of Fortune's wheel. And now, my dear friend, speak and speak true ; what difference between Harry Tudor and Cæsar Borgia ?

* * * * *

King Henry stands in a little meadow beyond the Tower moat, a page leading his great horse slowly up and down to prevent his catching cold in the morning air. Time goes slowly, and he falls to whistling a tune. He is an excellent

musician, and a poet of parts, and both air and words were inspired by his passion for Anne Boleyn in the days of his wooing :—

" When I remember me
Of your so gentle mind,
It may no wise agree
That I should be unkind.

" The daisy delectáble,
The violet wan and blo [blue]
They are not variáble,
I love you and no moe.

" I make you fast and sure,
It is to me great pain
So long to endure
Till that we meet again."

" No poet of my realm," thinks Henry, " can make words sing so naturally. My words are notes, the notes of the missel-thrush."

" It may no wise agree
That I should be unkind."

Henry fingers, crumpled in his doublet, the last letter he is likely to receive from Anne, despatched by way of final leave-taking from her ' dolorous prison in the Tower.' It is dated ' this sixth of May.' It was in the May time that he banqueted and fêted her ; in the greenest of the May. And now the year has brought anew

" The sweet season that bud and bloom forth brings."

The youth of London will not cease in their revels to despatch ale and cake with the girls, nor will they relegate the hobby-horse to his attic until to-morrow. The boughs of hawthorn are white yet above the citizens' porches. The May Lord

has chosen his May Lady, and to the sound of pipe and tabour and a jingle of bells Maid Marian foots it in the Morris dance with Robin or Friar Tuck or Scarlet or Little John.

" Try me, good King," writes Anne, " but let me have an open trial, and let not my sworn enemies sit as my accusers and judges ; yea, let me have an open trial for my truth shall fear no open shame."

The King shrugs slightly his Atlantean shoulders. He has sent for the executioner from Calais to Anne's beheading. He beheads not with the axe, but with a sword. In this he is unique. It is believed that his victims feel no pain, his stroke is ' so subtle.'

No signal yet from the Tower? Anne is long at her prayers. For very weariness of waiting the King falls again to perusing the writing in his hand. " . . . to speak truth, never Prince had wife more loyal in all duty, and in all true affection . . . you send unto me . . . willing me to confess and so obtain your favour . . . one whom you know to be mine ancient professed enemy. I no sooner received this message than I rightly conceived your meaning. . . . But let not your Grace ever imagine that your poor wife will ever be brought to acknowledge a fault where not so much as a thought thereof proceeded."

The little foot page, pausing for a moment in his exercising of the great horse, glances towards Henry, and stands as though petrified with terror at the scowl which suddenly disfigures his royal master's features. " It would have been better," Henry muses, " incalculably better, if the girl could have been persuaded to libel herself, she might have done so in the hope of regaining my favour, and with her written self-accusation, I could have justified myself with the citizens, and stuffed the maws of the incredulous. I must make no false step. There was Richard II. That poor fool

was called in his youth the ' King of London ' from the love these Londoners bore him, and in forfeiting their shallow affections he forfeited both liberty and life."

The little page, watching the King out of the corners of his eyes, comes out of his trance of terror again as an expression remotely resembling a smile succeeds by degrees to the scowl which had so terrified him.

" She was tried by her peers," Henry mutters ; great virtue in that ' tried by her peers ' with the blunt-witted many. Yet truly, why say I ' blunt-witted ' ? The facts are no otherwise than as I state them, and I, even I myself, could desire no better trial. When the Roman gourmet Lucullus had no guests to dine with him he would suffer no diminution in the labours of his cooks, for then, he was wont to say, " Lucullus dines with Lucullus." And so when Henry has no Court whisperers about him, he suffers not adulation to diminish, but takes a liberal view of his actions, for then Harry Tudor flatters Harry Tudor.

The sun is now up, and his joyous rays warm all of Henry except his heart. He glances yet again towards the battlements, but not finding what he seeks resumes his letter.

" My last and only request shall be that myself . . . only, shall bear the burthen of your Grace's displeasure, and that it may not touch the innocent souls of those poor gentlemen, who, as I understand, are likewise in strait imprisonment for my sake. If ever the name of Anne Boleyn was pleasing in your ears, then let me obtain this request."

Those gentlemen are already in their graves.

" With my earnest prayers to the Trinity to direct your Grace in all your actions——"

A sudden tuft of smoke hangs for a moment like a white plume above the north-west angle of the Keep, and Henry

hears, almost simultaneously, the roar of a cannon. This is his privy signal. The stroke has fallen. He doffs his bonnet with the conventional gesture of respect for the dead, crosses himself, and, as the bell begins now to toll out the death knell, strikes his gouty toes into the stirrup and departs at the gallop. . . .

From the lattice he knows so well a kerchief will flutter welcome.

Jane Seymour is waiting.

# CHAPTER V

## *A Holiday in Shakespeare's London*


LONDON AT THE TIME OF SHAKESPEARE, SHOWING THE GLOBE THEATRE AND THE BEAR GARDEN ON THE SURREY SIDE OF THE RIVER

*(From an engraving by Visscher, 1618)*

## *A Holiday in Shakespeare's London*

SHAKESPEARE'S LONDON — a little town with looped and battlemented walls and towers, and the gates, Newgate, Ludgate, Cripplegate, Bishopsgate, the Bridge Gate, Temple Bar, and the rest intact. The bright water of the Tower moat reflects its bluff and business-like proportions. A vast number of spires and pinnacles rise in bold silhouette against a clear sky—clear because the smoke of 'sea-coal' is pretty generally regarded as poisonous, not without reason perhaps, since in our own days this dun canopy of London has been suggested as one of the causes predisposing to neurasthenia and tuberculosis. When these Elizabethans do make use of coal, it is an occurrence sufficiently exceptional to call for comment.

> FALSTAFF: What is the gross sum that I owe thee?
> QUICKLY: Thou didst swear to me upon a parcel-gilt goblet, sitting in my Dolphin Chamber, at the round table, by a *seacoal fire*, upon Wednesday in Wheeson week, . . . thou didst swear to me then . . . to marry me and make me my lady thy wife.

But if coal is uncommon, wood with its tonic fragrance is plentiful for fuel. The wood smoke which had permeated dwelling-rooms in its attempt to escape from the old roof-vents, in the days before these new-fangled Elizabethan chimneys came into vogue, was commended by the die-hards of Henry VIII.'s reign for an excellent medicine when

well breathed into the lungs. Wood smoke was their sovereign preservative against the 'quack' and 'pose,' the 'quack' being hoarseness or sore throat, the 'pose' a catarrh or cold in the head, disorders to which it appears the effeminate Raleighs, Drakes, and Grenvilles were weakly prone. . . .

The immense tower of Old St Paul's dominates the City. The spire, destroyed by fire, is shortly to be repaired, and the workmen are now about it. Fields bound this city east, west, south, and north. On the high ground of Hampstead one can watch the turning windmills. Covent Garden, as its name implies, is the garden of what had been a convent until Henry VIII. laid his heavy hand upon it. Long Acre, to-day one of our main arteries of traffic, has not a single house. It is called 'Hedge Lane.' There is no house in the Haymarket. Chancery Lane is open country, so, too, is Holborn. The latter, indeed, is little changed since that day when King Richard III. saw 'good strawberries' in the Bishop of Ely's garden there, and besought the prelate to 'send for some of them.' A request to which the admirable man acceded with all the alacrity of a good gastronome—"Marry, and will, my lord, with all my heart."

In Piccadilly the Puritans, who inveigh against the pride and folly of dress, have established a manufactory where they make fortunes by constructing 'Piccadills'—ruffs or lace collars. But Piccadilly is so far from being a crowded quarter that Gerrard, the herbalist, wanders its wilds to gather simples. Drury Lane contains but half a dozen houses. Even the City proper is not overcrowded. There are many gardens in the City, and the smell of May and flowers in many of the streets. Bloomsbury is a tiny village in open country, to which doctors send children and invalids for fresh country air.

Old names which connote but bricks and mortar to the many are full of eloquence to the lover of the past.

On Shooter's Hill, for example, one morning on the first of May, Henry VIII. and his Queen of the moment had fallen into an ambush of merry fellows, disguised as Robin Hood and his outlaws. Having entertained the royal couple with diverse frolics, these masquers escorted them to a flowery arbour in the forest to banquet with them, after the poetical tradition of the good greenwood, on venison-pasty, old ale, and wine.

Ralf, the grocer's apprentice, in 'The Knight of the Burning Pestle,' that admirable satire upon knight-errantry in which Beaumont and Fletcher, in their main thesis, anticipated the Don Quixote of Cervantes by above a year, leads forth the youth of London to ale and cakes at Newington and Hoxton, with scarfs and garters, bells, drums, pipe and tabour for dancing the Morris.

Fleet Street, though not as yet associated with journalism, has already its 'silly season' wonders. "Were I in England now . . ." exclaims Trinculo, the drunken jester of 'The Tempest,' "and had but this fish painted, not a holiday fool but would give a piece of silver. . . . When they will not give a doit to relieve a lame beggar, they will lay out ten to see a dead Indian." He referred to the unfortunate, if malicious, Caliban. It was in Fleet Street that Indians, Calibans, and such-like old curiosities were laid out for the inspection of the curious, dead and doubtless none too fresh.

The 'sweet Thames' of the Renaissance has a wider span than that to which we are accustomed to-day, for modern engineering by deepening has narrowed it, but in this atmosphere devoid of coal smoke it runs clear and bright. We need not suspect the good faith of the poets who apply to it such epithets as 'silver,' 'crystal,' 'sparkling,'

because we learn from independent sources that salmon and such clean-living fish were taken in London waters with nets.

The Strand is lined with dwelling-houses on both sides so far as Charing Cross ; a Park Lane, infinitely more beautiful. A Venetian in London writes home to a friend : " The Thames has the appearance of a vast lagoon. The Palaces which stand in the water are nobler than ours." Those Strand houses which do not stand in the water have gardens where, in due season, flourish all that perfumed catalogue which the Viscount St Albans drew up as ' suitable to the climate of London.'

" For March there come violets . . . the yellow daffodil, the daisy, the almond tree in blossom. In April follow the double white violet, the wallflower, the stock-gilly flower, the cowslip, flower-de-luces and lilies of all natures . . . the French honeysuckle, the cherry tree in blossom . . . the white thorn in leaf, the lilac tree. . . ."

Southwark contains some few hundred houses. In Southwark stands the bear garden, a species of small theatre or circus for the baiting of bulls and bears. The glorious drama of the English Renaissance tends, little by little, to lure away the public from these unsavoury amusements. An institution where bulls gore dogs, and bull-dogs bite great pieces from the noses of bulls, where gallants drink and gamble, and touts and bookies bellow the odds, gives unwilling place to the drama of Shakespeare and his fellows, a drama that outsoars that of the Greeks at their highest pitch of glory.

No picture of Shakespeare's London can even approximate to completion which should omit London Bridge—*the* Bridge. Down stream there is no other, the nearest upstream is that at Kingston. The old bridge consists of

nineteen broad, pointed arches, with massive piers varying in breadth from twenty-five to thirty-four feet. Outside these piers again are further projections, mighty timber bastions called 'sterlings' or 'starlings,' designed to protect the piers against the unceasing fret of the stream. By reason of these obstructions the entire channel of the river is reduced from its normal breadth of nine hundred to a total waterway of one hundred and ninety-four feet, or but one-fourth of the whole.

The greater part of the bridge length is overbuilt with houses of which some, gabled and pinnacled, speak yet of the Middle Age, while others in the new style of the Renaissance, flaunt those decorative chimneys and gilded weather-vanes that we associate with Hampton Court. Two vacancies, however, are left clear of houses; one, the open space not far from the City called 'London Square,' which was in the Middle Ages the scene of mighty jousts and tournaments, the other that at the Southwark end, where stand the drawbridge and Gate House.

In the bridge centre rises the beautiful chapel of St Thomas à Becket. Such of these buildings as project over the water are underpropped by flying buttresses of timber-work. The road space of London Bridge is too narrow to afford a distinct path for travellers afoot, so these are fain to cross over, following closely behind the tail-boards of carts and wagons, a position that offers them some measure of security. Traffic across the bridge moves slowly, but even so the crossing is hazardous as that of modern Piccadilly Circus or Trafalgar Square. On the great waterway all classes meet. The State barge of the Sovereign, adorned with gold and purple and with emblazoned sails, bears him from the Tower to his Palace of Westminster. The 'Galley Foist,' the Lord Mayor's mighty three-master, sets forth his

state when he wills to go abroad. He embarks upon her in his robes and chain of office. His sturdy bargemen, bending to their oars, bring her from under the lea of the sheltering houses, they heel her about, she takes the breeze, her canvas bellies, and her streamers disentangling with a crisp swishing sound, the bright air becomes brighter for the silken blossoms.

Nobles in ornate barges with stern-awnings and painted banners, craft beautiful in line as Venetian gondolas, voyage to this place or that from the private water-gates of their gardens. Deep-sea fishermen sail into Thames mouth with their cargoes of fish for Billingsgate market. Here come the war galleys of Drake, 'with castled stern and lanterned poop,' to disgorge with all due precaution Spanish loot, to glut the coffers of the parsimonious Virgin Queen. Here come strange argosies with outlandish rigging from 'Tripolis,' Venice, and the Orient, deep-riding carracks from Bruges and the thriving coast towns of Flanders: many venturers from many seas, and all bring wealth into the port of that city which is rapidly becoming the trading centre of the world, wealth—and the marvel tales of the voyagers to fire the imagination of the City and the City poets. What strange histories do they recount, these glorious talkers, seated at their tavern settles beneath their low-pitched smoky rafters, ear-ringed, bearded, drinking! What 'unpath'd waters' have they traversed, the abode of mermaids, what unicorns have they beheld, what satyrs, about what 'isles of devils' have they coasted, where plates of gold are to be had for the asking! For the composition of this new-discovered world of theirs is as yet unknown; a child's toy painted with strange ships, strange beasts, strange palaces, and part cargo of all their vessels is the stuff of dreams.

And all the while, owing to the sliddery irregularities of the cobbled streets and the fact that there is but one bridge to cross by, the ferrymen drive a roaring trade, singing, shouting, boisterous, touting shamelessly for fares, often fighting amongst themselves for the privilege of ferrying this or that richly dressed gentleman to the farther shore.

Cheapside, the 'Golden Cheap' of the poet Herrick, is the great market, much as it might be the market of some county town to-day. From it, booth-decked streets stretch away so far as to Guildhall and Basinghall. The names of these streets yet signify the nature of the trades anciently driven there. Lombard Street is the street of the Lombard bankers who transact their affairs sitting in the open at their booths. Threadneedle Street of the tailors; Bread Street of the bakers; Ironmonger Street, Wood Street, Milk Street, Cornhill, Honey Lane, The Poultry, are self-explanatory. Friday Street corresponds with those many 'marchés du vendredi' which confront one in France and Belgium. In this street the fishmongers sell their wares for the fast day, Friday, when fish, eggs, and salads are eaten to the exclusion of meat. For under this new Protestant England the old fast day is still retained in part to the glory of God, and in part, as becomes a practical people, to give employment to the sailors of the English fishing fleets. But the carnally minded are bringing old customs into disuse.

"There is another indictment upon thee," says Sir John Falstaff with irony, "for suffering flesh to be eaten in thy house, contrary to the law." Mistress Quickly, who sees nothing ludicrous in Sir John as an earnest pleader in the cause of abstinence, answers in all seriousness, "All victuallers do so: what's a joint of mutton or two in a whole Lent?"

Cheapside is by far the richest quarter of this London of the Tudors, hence the appropriateness of Herrick's epithet of 'Golden.' We read of the goldsmiths' shops there, and of their exquisite craftsmanship. We read also of the fifty-two goldsmiths' shops, 'in a street called the Strand leading to St Paul's,' which an Italian tells us he saw 'so rich and full of silver vessels, great and small, that in all the shops of Milan, Rome, Venice, and Florence put together, I do not think there are to be found so many, nor of the magnificence to be seen in London.' This from a fellow-countryman of Benvenuto Cellini! But the Italians, a generous people, are not sparing of the English praise. Cheapside is the great show street for pageants, and the richest tapestries and cloths of gold and silver are displayed when occasion calls, from the lattice windows of the wealthy merchants.

Display was a Tudor passion. Henry VIII. for obvious reasons saw less of his coronation procession than did the majority of his subjects. Tradition says that he ordered the ceremony to be repeated upon the day next following when, employing a substitute to impersonate himself, he mingled in the crowd disguised as one of his own guard. He is believed to have watched the pageant standing unrecognised upon the cobbles.

Was there any sequel to this adventure? How did the royal runaway fleet the hour now that he had put a gulf between himself and the ceremonious life of Court? Did he wander to Pye Corner? Did he sup at the Boar's Head in Eastcheap? And if so, with whom? Was there any little citizen's wife to whom he was plain 'Captain Harry of the Guard, such a gentlemanly man, you know'? Tradition is silent. And silence is doubtless best, if there be truth in proverbs.

These pageants have none of the banality of a modern

Lord Mayor's Show. Although he regards them as 'toys,' they are yet of sufficient importance to lure the Lord Verulam from his severer studies. But these gay blossoms are to wither with so much else that is either laughter-moving or beautiful. The canker is already in the rose. Tribulation-Wholesome and Zeal-of-the-Land Busy are abroad in the world propagating their doctrines, and Puritanism will prove itself as helpful to poetry as an east wind to bronchitis. The world is to grow old suddenly, the hobby-horse to be shut out from the fields, the maypoles to be hacked to pieces, laughter to become suspect, the playhouses to close down, old courtesies to be out of fashion. The poets even are to lose their old light-heartedness, till the divine Milton, fading into a heretic twilight, is to stoop from his sublime imaginings to fling a scoff at these older pageants as exhibitions where

> 'grooms besmeared with gold
> Dazzle the crowd and set them all agape,'

at religions

> 'Gay with pomp and gold'

and at all which now delights these Elizabethans

> 'Mixt Dance, or wanton Mask, or Midnight bal,
> Or serenate, which the starv'd Lover sings
> To his proud fair, best quitted with disdain.'

Yet why so quitted, was not the song worth thanks?

But this epoch is not yet.

The men of the flood-tide of the Renaissance would seem to be possessed by the spirit of comedy, to feel with their contemporary Rabelais that 'laughter is a passion proper to a man,' and beauty walks abroad in the world unconfined by court or cloister. The world-famous Inigo

Jones grows busy upon triumphal arches, and Beaumont, Fletcher, and Ben Jonson raise the masque to the topmost pinnacle of lyric fancy. The chamber music of the day is of a consummate distinction, while the slightest lyric of Lyly, of Dekker, of Lodge or Green or Peele has a literary quality that places it as high above the appreciation of our habitual revue haunters as that of an idyll of Theocritus. Men have recaptured the sanity and proportion, the grace and elegance of Greece.

When banquets follow a pageant, and invariably many do, all that remains of them, much bread, beef, boar's flesh, wine, beer, and venison-pasty is carried by immemorial tradition to the 'poor at the gates.' Masters allow their prentices to shut up shop for the day, and life does not again resume the normal until much singing, music, drinking, and dancing has crowned the holiday.

I shall now attempt the description of a typical day as a twentieth-century Londoner, carried back through time to the London that Shakespeare knew, might conceivably spend it. . . .

* * * * *

I awake in a bedchamber of the 'Bear' in Southwark. I am lying in a carved oak four-poster, and as I am not accustomed to sleep within hangings, I awake with a sense of stuffy discomfort. A few yards beyond the bedpost I see in the oak-panelled wall the two casement windows with their leaded diamond panes, window seats, and cushions.

The wall on my right hand is hung with a tapestry portraying the legend of Venus and Adonis. From beneath a tree full of fruit the wild boar rushes, and Adonis, garbed in padded breeches and jerkin, and sporting a coquettish bonnet, strikes at the monster with his spear. But later the youthful hunter lies a-dying before Venus' temple, an

edifice in the Hellenic-Jacobean style, and the Queen of Beauty and the Graces beweep him in ruffs and farthingales.

The wall on my left is hung with a painted cloth. These cloths are gay and bright, and as they are also cheap they are beginning to take the place of tapestry in the citizens' houses. This cloth upon my left hand shows me the Prodigal Son with rings on his fingers delicately feeding swine. I turn my head. The wall behind me is not panelled but of timber and plaster, and upon this plaster, which is flush with the timbering, one beholds a most unusual sight. Storks with singularly fat bills and elephants whose trunks are no whit less obese, meander hither and thither in a forest which seems to be planted with those highly conventional Christmas trees that one associates with a child's toy farmyard. Storks and elephants are commensurate for bulk, and I gather from texts which adorn the forest that I am looking upon the Garden of Eden. Curious.

Stools, a high-backed, carved oak chair with tapestry cushion, and a stout oak table on which stand a mirror and candlestick of silver, complete the furniture, save for the rushes upon the floor.

The familiar who has transported me to Shakespeare's London now enters the bedchamber, and in the guise of a French lackey helps to array me in my clothes. My shirt I am already wearing when the familiar enters. I have slept in it, apparently quite the correct thing to do.

I adjust about my neck my starched ruff of Flemish lace, which has cost a good twenty shillings, say, eight pounds modern money. I draw on my white silk stockings and breeches carefully padded out with bran, to make me look, if that may be done, imposing. They are wrought with silver roses upon a ground of blue. My doublet, a species of

sleeved waistcoat, tallies in colour though not in design with the breeches, for the silver roses have given place to lateral silver stripes, again upon a ground of blue.

My Spanish leather shoes are slashed, the better to display the white silk of the stockings beneath ; the shoe-laces are crimson. But these shoes I discard in favour of riding boots, and silver spurs with unnecessarily large rowels jingle at my heels.

The lackey clips-to the gold clasp of the scarlet sash from which dangle my gilt rapier and dagger. I cast my purple cloak about me ; it is lined with scarlet and purfled with gold. I take from the lackey the high-crowned hat of white beaver with its crimson ostrich feather and jewelled brooch, and then while he holds the mirror I take stock of so much of the effect as I can judge from its silver surface.

I saunter down the broad oak stairs, giving up as futile the attempt not to swagger, and call for a morning draught of sack with an egg in it. I pay the reckoning, but must not glance at the items. I am *not* a merchant. I then proceed to take leave in style, imitating the fashion of two gallants who have just quitted the house.

" God be wi' you, Ned ; God be wi' you, Harry ! " The quality can afford thus to address the drawers by their Christian names, besides they are the more likely to give you credit should you pass that way again when you have had an unlucky run with the dice. I kiss my hostess, and the vintner comes forward with a stirrup cup which he entreats me to drink at the expense of the house, an offer which I graciously accept.

The lackey now leads round a handsome Galloway nag from the stable, relieves me of my cloak and holds the bridle while I mount. He then proceeds, still carrying the cloak, to run before the horse, while I amble gaily after him along

the cobbled streets. Our first visit is to a barber. I find that owing to the familiar's magic I have grown a beard in the night, and this must be looked to. I draw rein at a shop displaying the barber's pole painted sugar-stick fashion white and red, a terrible symbol intended to suggest not sugar but a white bandage upon a bleeding limb, for the barbers are also the surgeons and dentists. And in effect what I had at first sight taken to be a tassel dangling from the pole, proves on close inspection to be a number of human teeth knotted in a string.

I enter the shop, a charming apartment of brick and timber, and I am thinking how idyllic it looks when a sudden howl of agony roots me to the ground. The barber notices my amazement.

" Be seated, sir. 'Tis my assistant, George, drawing the gentleman's tooth in the next room."

This statement is now confirmed by the entry of the patient himself. He emerges from the sanctum, a large tear trickling down his dapper yellow beard, and one hand clasped woefully to his cheek. He bows awkwardly to the company, and leaves the room hurriedly for a cup of sack, perhaps two cups, at an adjacent tavern.

Only two gentlemen biding their turn. I shall not have long to wait. No newspapers of course, but the barber's loquacity does ample duty for a column of gossip. Only one man dead of ' the sickness ' these two months. The doctors are beginning at last to understand the nature of the plague. Cleverer fellows, he thinks, than in the olden times.

There is talk of a new venture to Guinea in Africa, and Sir Walter Raleigh to be released from the Tower to undertake it. They say you know that the natives have eyes in their shoulders, and mouths in the middle of their

breasts. These foreigners are all alike. After all, there's no place like London. . . .

One of the two gentlemen takes down a lute from its peg on the wall, runs his fingers over the wires, bows to the company, and proceeds to play and sing.

> 'Spring, the sweet spring, is the year's pleasant king,
> Then blooms each thing, then maids dance in a ring.
> Cold doth not sting, the pretty birds do sing,
> Cuckoo, jug-jug, puwee, to witta woo.'

The singer is evidently in no hurry, and on a glance from him I take the barber's chair which has now become vacant. The barber detects a tiny feather on my hair, that confounded mirror at the inn was too small for me to see myself in detail. The barber holds the feather delicately between finger and thumb and whispers, looking whimsically at me :—

" I will replace it when I have trimmed your hair. Some gentlemen," he added confidentially, " are not averse I know to showing that they sleep on down, not on straw like merchants, or flock like pedlars." This suggestion I reject with high indignation, but the barber continues to look odiously knowing. Snobbishness, I reflect, is not of an age but all time, and barbers were ever incorrigible.

" How will you have it cut ? " the torturer is inquiring, " short above the ears, or short below the ears ? Long as a water-spaniel's and frizzled, or short as a new-shorn sheep ? And the beard, sir ? I cut for all tastes. Round like a Philip's dollar ? Square like the King's Head in Fish Street ? Or you will prefer perhaps the 'pique devaunt' or——"

" Cut it even as you list," I answer, bewildered by the interminable vista of incredible possibilities.

The gentleman with the lute has now embarked upon

another ditty. He is evidently in no hurry. I fancy he must live on his rents.

> 'Oh the month of May, the merry month of May,
> So frolic, so gay and so green, so green, so green,
> And then did I unto my true-love say,
> Sweet Peggy, thou shalt be my Summer Queen.'

The operations of trimming, curling, perfuming, and laving the cheeks with 'sweet water' are now concluded. A bow to the lutanist and I rejoin my lackey.

"Get rid of the horse," I suggest, "leave it at some stables, and rejoin me on the steps of St Paul's."

The lackey sets off to perform my bidding, and I pick my way at a leisurely pace towards the old Gothic Cathedral. I stroll about the prodigious monument, and examine it from all points of the compass. The citizens have not done it the injury that their descendants will that of Sir Christopher Wren; they have not built huge houses all about so close as to mask it. This older 'Paul's' stands in a spacious cathedral close, from every quarter of which the view of it is admirable.

I make my way to the East End portico, and crane my neck to get a good look at the two Jacks-o'-the-Clock who, standing beneath the Man in the Moon, are now beating with their hammers the hour of eleven. In this posture the lackey finds me, and we enter together under the great porch.

Old St Paul's, by reason of its central position and the facilities it offers all Londoners for a general rendezvous, more especially in wet weather, has come with time to resemble rather a market-place than a church.

'Si Quisses,' or bills, in which masters advertise for servants or servants notify masters that they are seeking

situations, dangle from many of the pillars, and I laugh outright when it flashes upon my mind that it was here in this church that Sir John Falstaff "*bought* Bardolph." Conversation is loud and incessant. The familiar points me out a little tailor who, tablets in hand, appears to be spying upon us from behind a pillar.

"Why is he so interested in us?" I inquire.

"He is jotting down notes about your costume," the lackey makes answer; "in ten days' time you shall see twenty gentlemen suited in the exact fashion in which you go now. All fashions of the world meet in Paul's—French, Flemish, Almaine, the Italian. Paul's is to the Londoner what St Mark's Piazza is to the Venetian, a place of concourse for all Christendom."

A few moments elapse while we survey the so-called Duke Humphrey's tomb, and the curious rabble collected about it.

"The Duke's tomb is sanctuary," my informant explains, "and chiefly frequented these days by debtors. As the song has it,

> 'The beggars gather at the Bush,
> Then with Duke Humphrey dine.'

The table is meagre, but among the guests assembled you will find no creditor. You may stretch your legs there the whole afternoon, converse, plot, laugh, talk anything, and in the evening, even by lamplight, steal out and so cozen a whole covey of abominable catchpoles."

A dirty fellow at this juncture sidles up with an offer to sell me his rapier, that "has seen service in the Low Country Wars," as "a bargain, good-cheap at five pounds." I decline his offer, and this fellow is now joined by another. The pair enter into friendly colloquy, and the newcomer informs the man with the rapier that he has just been smoking an ounce

of tobacco and is come "to spit private in Paul's." This man likewise has an offer to propound.

It appears he is a professional exponent of the art of taking tobacco. He will teach me to know at a glance which pipe will burn well, and which will break in the burning, which hath a good bore and the like. He will teach me to differentiate between the diverse brands of tobacco, and to know each his distinctive quality. He will give reasons for preferring 'Cane' to 'Trinidado,' or 'Trinidado' to 'Pudding.' He will tell me at which apothecaries it were best to purchase the weed. He will practise me at the 'whiff' or trick of inhaling, and at the eloquent flourish with which two gallants make a mutual interchange of pipes for friendship's sake or fashion's. He will teach me to blow rings. . . .

I tip this singular expert, but decline a course of lessons. As we turn to make our way back to the centre aisle, some small flying object strikes my sleeve and leaves a muddy trail upon the blue and silver. It proves to be a fragmentary tennis ball. Two street urchins are playing together, and one has muffed a catch. The boys are a public nuisance! The ball rolls amongst the debtors, but is returned smartly by an ex-tapster, moth-eaten but friendly, in the interests of sport.

In the centre aisle gentlemen of fashion are passing the time of day, toying with gilt 'pick tooths,' gloves perfumed with civet, or embroidered handkerchiefs. Others wind up, as an excuse for showing them, those most costly toys, the newly manufactured watches. Shakespeare's Malvolio pictures himself in his dream of greatness as toying with some rich jewel or winding up his watch.

We approach the choir. A service is in progress, a feast day apparently. The second lesson is being read when a

foolish fopling, with more wealth than wit, creates an unlucky diversion. Drawing from his pocket a silk purse, perfumed and embroidered, he fills his palm with silver pieces, and then throwing them with deliberation among the choir boys, provokes a scramble which it takes time to repress.

We now poise the rival claims of a climb up to visit the roof (where more names are to be seen cut in the leads than are to be found in all the old chronicles of England) or dinner at an ordinary. Hunger wins the day.

The Cathedral is at some distance behind us when we catch sight of a fellow standing in the pillory, but, odd! how respectable he looks! By his right foot, upon the pillory footboard, stands a handsome high-crowned hat of black felt. His shirt is well embroidered. His doublet and breeches are of black frieze, his stockings of white silk. A talkative fellow in the crowd volunteers information.

The man we see before us in that pillory is a 'counterfeit crank,' that is, in their thieves' jargon, a man who lives on alms that he obtains by feigning sickness. At one time that vagabond traversed half the country, clad only in tattered breeches and a greasy jerkin, with blood perpetually oozing from beneath his eyes. How did he bleed? He bought the blood at the butcher's, and carried it about as make-up in a bladder in his wallet. His tale then was that he was a sufferer from the falling sickness, and fall he would, if he saw folks to be sceptical, and foam at the mouth, too; the foam he produced by chewing soft soap. On his lucky days he had extorted from the charitable or the fearful a veritable fortune, as much, the informant had been creditably assured, as fourteen shillings. With his takings he had bought a house and furnished it handsomely, and certain it was he knew no honest trade. Unfortunately for him, he had asked alms of a country magistrate, stating that he had been for a

long time an inmate of Bethlehem hospital. Bethlehem was communicated with post, but declined the honour of his acquaintance.

The magistrate therefore, with his man's assistance, stripped the fellow naked and confiscated three fat purses which he found tied about his waist.

These he confiscated that the money might be distributed amongst the deserving poor of his parish. As to the rogue, the man of law had treated him very humanly, allowing him to drink nigh a quart of strong old ale, but thus refreshed he had contrived to make good his escape, and was later observed heading for London at a speed which did not suggest mortal illness, stark naked and much pelted by the boys. He now discarded as dangerous a disguise which had become too well known, as he had forgone on previous occasions those of mariner, artificer, and serving-man.

He next attired himself in the costume in which we now beheld him, giving out this time that he was a hatter of Leicester whose shop had been burnt to the ground.

Being again identified after many months, he was flogged through London at the cart-tail, and a placard was borne before him stating very pertinently that he was a 'counterfeit crank.' Yesterday he stood in the pillory in his earlier disguise of jerkin, greasy breeches, and blood-smeared face; "and to-day we see him in his disguise as hatter, so we ought to know him again, when he comes to us to beg alms, and we can judge moreover," our informant concludes brightly, "whether he look pleasanter in his handsome or ugly apparel."

This London, I gather, swarms with rogues and vagabonds, whose numbers have been on the increase for nigh a century. A variety of causes are given me as contributing

to this unhappy state of affairs. So early as Henry VII.'s reign the great change from tillage to pasturage had thrown countless farm labourers out of employ. The sheep had become a 'monster who had eaten up the men.' Then under Henry VIII. had come the dissolution of the monasteries, which had deprived the poor of all systematic relief. Then again men kept no servants now, not at least such hosts as they had been accustomed to in the old days when retainers were still allowed by law. For the men of those times

> 'Never knew what belonged to footmen or pages
> But kept fifty stout fellows in blue coats and badges.'

But no one maintains such retinues now. Those 'fifty stout fellows' are turned loose upon the world, so it behoves the honest traveller by night to look shrewdly about him, and provide himself with some 'pretie short snappers' for his personal defence. No one keeps a country Christmas, I am informed, to-day, which formerly relieved the poor for twelve days at least in the comfortless dead season of the year. But master and mistress take coach and post away to keep their Christmas in London. Last, but not least, civil life has failed to reabsorb those soldiers and sailors who volunteered in the days of the Spanish menace and were afterwards disbanded.

Now for our 'counterfeit crank' we could do nothing, so we abandoned that woeful comedian to the tender mercies of the mob, one of whom was pressing forward with a dead cod-fish to throw at him. We enter the ordinary of the 'Crown' just as Paul's Jacks beat out the half-hour. Half after eleven, the fashionable dinner-hour; ten or ten-thirty for students; merchants at noon.

I am ushered ceremoniously to a seat above the great salt cellar, an invidious position as I am not long in discover-

ing. On the strength of my gay attire it is vaguely assumed that I must be a knight, and as such, and sitting above the salt, I now find I am expected to pay for the wine of such gentlemen of lesser degree as choose to request me. There is no false pride. A dozen convives request me immediately, and I satisfy their insatiable thirst at immoderate expense.

Mutton follows soup, goose mutton, and woodcocks goose. It is as well that I made but a light breakfast. When the mutton comes smoking to the board, I look about me with a growing feeling of panic; spoons and knives in abundance, but no forks!

Luckily the gentleman opposite me, whose white silk doublet lavishly besprinkled with pearls suggests quality, is in a position to remove my apprehension.

"May I proffer you one of my forks, sir? I bought the pair of them in Italy. One resides here in its sheath by my dagger, the other I am in the habit of bringing also, on the chance that it may prove of service to a friend. They may call us effeminate if they will, but the fork is a good innovation, and I for one shall not be laughed out of it!" And he proffers with a bow a delicately chased two-pronged fork of silver gilt.

An old gentleman on his right, with beard of 'formal cut' much stiffened with starch, gives a sudden snort of indignation:

"My age gives me the prerogative to tell you, young gentlemen, that this fork business is the very foppery of the times. London is become the veritable 'ship of fools' of the older poets. I am sixty and a Justice of the Peace to boot, so that I am, under the King, in some authority. When you grow to my age you will see the folly of eating meat with *a fork*! Englishman is Englishman no more. My country-

men transform themselves daily into zanies, apes, and Frenchmen ! "

Loud laughter follows this explosion which, however, no one seems disposed to take in ill part, and the company, with only two exceptions, continue sturdily to convey their mutton to their mouths with their fingers, as true-born Englishmen should.

The door swings open suddenly, and a gentleman enters whose costume of black and yellow velvet appears somewhat the worse for wear ; while the lace frill which adorns the high, close-fitting collar is badly frayed. He wears moustache and imperial. His brown hair curls abundantly. His forehead is large, his eyes brown and sparkling. His air bespeaks vivacity and sensitiveness. He hangs his hat and cloak upon a peg, and lays upon them a pair of gloves, into one of which he has thrust a manuscript.

" Ah, Master Dekker," cries the old Justice, " well met ! Do you come from rehearsing ? I am going this afternoon to see your play of ' The Shoemaker's Holiday.' Who is your chief character, lover or tyrant ? "

" 'Tis a tale of the Earl of Lincoln's son, Roland Lacey," Dekker answers, " he makes over to his friend his post of Colonel in the French wars, and turns shoemaker for the love of Rose, his sweetheart. At the end he is reconciled to the King's grace through the good offices of the Lord Mayor."

" A likely story," cries the old Justice, with a loud roar of laughter.

" Nay, sir," cries the poet, " the story is history and very well known."

" In that case," cries the old fellow unabashed, " I fill you this bumper of wine. You will dine with me, Master Dekker, will you not ? Come, let us have a poem while they dish up your meat."

As nobody appears surprised at this request, I guess it to be some custom of the house. My surmise proves correct, for my hostess, whom I sound upon this point later while settling my account, assures me that it is ordinary, and that her house is much frequented by amateurs of letters who come expressly on the chance of hearing some writer of note deliver his own compositions. Sometimes a poet will have a private signal of his own by which he informs the company if he be in the mood to recite and have some new piece by him. In this way he does not seem to press for an audience, and there is no obligation on anybody's part to request a song or poem unless he wish it. A manuscript thrust into a glove is a common trick, and that is Master Dekker's custom, as perhaps you will have noticed. But it is etiquette to offer to pay the dinner of a writer from whom you have requested a recitation.

Dekker bows to the company, who in turn bow to him, and proceeds to recite as follows :—

" Haymakers, rakers, reapers, and mowers,
Wait on your summer queen ;
Dress up with musk rose her eglantine bowers,
Daffodils strew the green ;
Sing, dance and play,
'Tis holiday ;
The sun doth bravely shine
On our ears of corn.
Rich as a pearl
Comes every girl,
This is mine, this is mine, this is mine,
Let us die ere away they be borne.

* * * * *

" Wind, jolly huntsmen, your neat bugles shrilly,
Hounds make a lusty cry ;
Spring up, you falconers, your partridges freely,
Then let your brave hawks fly.

Horses amain,
Over ridge, over plain,
The dogs have the stag in chase :
'Tis a sport to content a king.
So ho, ho ! through the skies
How the proud bird flies,
And sousing, kills with a grace !
Now the deer falls, hark how they ring ! "

" Master Dekker," says the old fellow gently, " I have heard tell that you composed that song when in the Counter, a prisoner for debt. You bear a stoic mind above all misfortunes."

" 'Tis true, sir," the poet answers, " to be immured within stone walls is the readiest road to pine and yearn for green fields. We have no redress against the pirate printers. They take down our plays in shorthand at the playhouse, and publish and republish. The world suffers them to pick our pockets as surely as they pick our brains. Then with our money, my fellows' and mine, they purchase that safety and those distinctions and honours which are denied to us."

" Your song has a most noble lilt," I observe, anxious to distract the poet from his gloomy thoughts.

" Yet had I been in the country," answers Dekker, " at the time that song was composing, I should not have had my lambs, huntsmen, eglantine, and partridges all on one stage at one time. But the song is not academic. It cannot possibly smell of the lamp, for at the time I wrote it I had not a groat wherewith to purchase either lamp-oil or food ! "

And Dekker falls to upon the mutton with cormorant appetite, attacks the goose in a manner which shows that this is no time for trifling, makes small work of woodcocks,

draws level with the others at the entrance of the cheese, and most emphatically outdistances them with the mulberries.

"And your play," I venture to inquire, "is it comedy or tragedy? Excuse my ignorance, but I only arrived in this London of yours this morning."

"'Tis comedy and was played in the last reign by my Lord Admiral's servants before the Queen's Majesty. Take all in good worth that is well intended, for nothing is purposed but mirth. Mirth lengtheneth long life which with all other blessings I heartily wish you, and to that end drink to you," and the poet 'noheels' a silver can very handsomely. "I must now go on before you to the playhouse. Farewell."

On entering the Old Fortune Playhouse I look about me amazedly, and no wonder.

The long platform of this Elizabethan stage projects a good twenty feet into the auditorium, so that when the players advance, it will be impossible for them to face more than a fraction of the audience at one time. From the roof above the stage hang two large candelabra.

At the back of the stage are the curtains through which the players will have to make their entry, and immediately above these curtains is a small recess, also curtained, and capable of representing, as the exigencies of the scene demand, town walls, a tower, or the balcony before a lady's chamber window.

To right and left of this recess three tiers of boxes surround the house, and these boxes and the stage itself are protected from the weather by a thick roof of thatch, but all else is left open to the sky, and it is obvious that if it come on to rain, the folk in the yard or cockpit will be drenched.

'The groundlings,' the 'stinkards,' the 'rascality,' by

such like pretty names do the gallants of the day designate the unfortunate frequenters of the pit. But when we consider the uncertain tenure by which the majority of these great dramatists hold on to life, when we weigh on the one hand the sublimity of their contribution to the culture of the world, and on the other their debts, distresses, and obscure and early deaths, one feels safe in assuming that the great nobles of the day are not the generous and enlightened patrons of the arts that they will be sometimes represented.

As I sit upon one corner of the stage and watch the cockpit fill, I find myself wondering to what extent the patrons of this day do really benefit the dramatists, and reviewing the situation from the point of view of a man of that twentieth century from which I have come. The Queen, for instance, of whom our feminists make so great a to-do as a patron of art and letters. A playwright of our own times has gone so far as to represent her in close colloquy with Shakespeare in one of her palaces, lamenting to him that tragic occurrence, the death of Marlowe, and finally vacating the apartment in order that the master dramatist may work in peace and quiet.

I wonder what really was the extent of Elizabeth's interest in that poetry which we call 'Elizabethan,' and which we should call 'Renaissance,' since the father of all the sonneteers, Surrey, was beheaded by Henry VIII. (which throws a curious sidelight upon his attitude towards letters), while 'Hamlet,' 'Macbeth,' and 'King Lear,' together with all the masques of Ben Jonson, were produced under James I.

Let us review some facts.

Thomas Kyd, author of the primitive play of 'Hamlet,' is believed to have been racked to induce him to accuse his fellow-dramatist Marlowe of 'atheism.' Let this be true or

not, no tradition pretends that the Queen so much as raised a finger to prevent so foul an outrage.

The 'Old Fortunatus' of that Dekker whom Charles Lamb so truly stated to have "poetry enough for anything," was produced at Court. He wrote a Prologue in the customary heightened style of courtly panegyric. Of the two 'Old Men' of this Prologue the first declares :—

> "Our eyes are dazzled by Eliza's beams,"

and the second :—

> "You are still bright, still divine :
> I weep for joy to see the world decay,
> Yet see Eliza flourishing like May."

(The May bud was now in her sixty-eighth year, . . . "her nose a little hooked, her lips narrow and her teeth black," a defect which Paul Hentzner, to whom we owe these details, ascribed to the immoderate use of sugar. "She wore false hair.") What was the fate of the poet who in so marked a manner recommended himself to the royal protection ?

He composed with fluency, he was excessively industrious. Imprisonments for debt are almost the only record left of him besides those few works of his which have come down to our own day. We neither know the date of his birth nor death. The favourites of princes do not live in such obscurity.

Where is the grave of Beaumont, of Fletcher, of Webster ?

Lyly was a Court poet, a delightful lyrist, and the author of nine successful plays. We find him at last petitioning her Majesty "for some little grant to support him in his old age."

Peele, while still an Oxford undergraduate, was already

" esteemed a most noted poet." His history differs little from that of his fellows. In commending himself to the Queen, he comes no whit behind Dekker. " The date of his death is unknown."

One might swell the list indefinitely, but to what end? To which, if any, of those unhappy men of genius did this princess extend the hand of pity and compassion? Which of those great creators of the drama, if any, did her bounty ever release from a debtor's prison?

Shakespeare unquestionably possessed a measure of worldly shrewdness, which is not always incompatible with pre-eminent genius. It seems improbable that he was at any time of his life in quite such straits as certain of his fellows. But yet that intimate document the sonnets must, one feels, reflect the good offices of Elizabeth, had any such been exercised towards him.

> " Yes, it is true I have gone here and there,
> And made myself a motley to the view."

It is painful to think of the master-spirit expressing himself with such bitterness, and then—

> " Tir'd with all these, for restful death I cry,
> As to behold desert a beggar born . . .
> And art made tongue-tied by authority,
> And folly, doctor-like, controlling skill."

Does this speak of sympathy and understanding in high places? We know that the Master of the Revels was allowed to botch and bowdlerise the text of his plays, 'controlling skill.'

Again,

> " When in disgrace with fortune and men's eyes
> I all alone beweep my outcast state,

> And trouble deaf heaven with my bootless cries,
> And look upon myself and curse my fate,
> Wishing me like to one more rich in hope
> Featur'd like him, like him with friends possess'd. . . ."

It is inconceivable that the master should have complained alike of lack of friends and hope, had the Queen entertained for him that warm and generous regard with which she is invariably credited by sentimental propagandists. That she lacked fundamental generosity of soul is proved sufficiently by her treatment of the soldiers of Leicester's expedition to the Low Countries, of her sailors who had fought the Armada, and hardly less by the petty and odious tyranny which she did not think it beneath her to exercise over her maids of honour, of which the case of Elizabeth Vernon furnishes a typical example. It is not of such material that the great patrons of the arts are made.

And surely the Lord Chamberlain, with the Master of the Revels and such minor officers under him as were more immediately concerned with the production of plays at Court, were more likely to be personally acquainted with Shakespeare than the Queen? Aubrey tells us of the great dramatist that "if invited to Court, he was in paine." If this tradition be reliable, the master would not on these rare occasions go out of his way to make himself prominent. Is it not more than conceivable that even in her age Elizabeth might have passed Shakespeare in the street and wondered who he was?

The old Justice and the gentleman who lent me the fork at the ordinary have likewise procured stools for their sixpences, and taken their seats with me upon a corner of the projecting stage. The boxes are filling rapidly. Collectors move amongst the crowd who stand about the

stage, and take their pennies. The white flag upon the theatre roof, which has been fluttering gallantly in the breeze and giving the world to understand that a comedy is toward (a black would have signified tragedy), is now hauled down.

Prologue in the tiring-room peeps through the stage curtains and, seeing that the house is nearly full, proceeds to give his cheeks colour by vigorous rubbing, for rouge, though well known to ladies, is not as yet customary upon the stage.

And now three successive blasts upon the trumpet bespeak silence, and announce to the audience that Prologue is about to approach. He enters thrusting aside the curtains, and advancing to the stage centre assumes a statuesque pose. It is impossible upon this stage for a player to lounge or slouch, for he is under view from every point of the compass at once.

"Kind gentlemen and honest boon companions——"[1]

he opens, and at this highly opportune moment three fops, tricked out in the very height of the fashionable eccentricity, clamber noisily upon the unoccupied corner of the stage opposite.

These newcomers have long ago taken care to 'put themselves,' in Shakespeare's phrase, into 'the trick of singularity.' They bow to several ladies in the boxes and salute by name as many gentlemen. One of the three causes great indignation in the cockpit by neglecting for many minutes to remove his Scotch bonnet with its nodding crimson plume, which he is determined shall not pass unnoticed.

The second member of the trio wears 'the lock,' a

[1] From the 'Epistle' prefixed to 'The Shoemaker's Holiday.'

fashion supposedly introduced from Persia, and which consists in the majority of cases in cultivating a particularly long lock of hair upon one or other side of the head, and adorning it with a ribbon, deftly tied in a bow. This particular gallant, however, has improved upon this very commonplace idea. His 'lock' consists of a species of kissing-curl trained to hang precisely in the centre of the forehead, like an inverted point of interrogation.

The third original, who wears a cloak of Turkey grogram, has an affected trick of holding his forefinger behind his right ear. He is not averse to calling the attention of such dull souls as may be incapable of a passionate attachment to the fact that his lady-love's muddy shoe-string is drawn through a hole in the lobe of his right ear, bored in fact for no other purpose. It dangles very prettily, some ten inches below the affected organ, and diverts all attention from that other curious toy, an immense ear-ring of precious pearl-Orient.

One of the three intruders now produces a gold tinder-box, strikes steel on flint with a harsh metallic rasping, lights a match from the tinder flame, a wax candle from the match, and they proceed to fill long churchwardens and light tobacco. This matter comfortably adjusted, the exquisite with the red plume in his bonnet discovers that one leg of his three-legged stool is slightly shorter than the others. He gives vent to sundry merry jests about the rascality of the niggardly carpenter and his mean economising of timber, at which his two friends laugh very heartily, and now discarding the offending stool he proceeds to stretch himself at full length upon the rushes in the position still affected by Hamlet in the play scene, so disposing of himself in fact that, if the Prologue suddenly advance, he must inevitably trip and fall full length upon the stage. These

antics put the quaking actor beside his part. He repeats again his opening address—

"Kind gentlemen——"

"And honest boon companions"—chimes Red Plume from the floor. "We heard you the first time, my friend. On, fellow, on, or are you like the cuckoo that can sing but one note?"

By this time Kissing Curl has once more ignited the candle (Shoe String had blown it out), and candle in hand he proceeds leisurely towards the Prologue and subjects the trimming of his sash to an elaborate scrutiny. He shouts back to Shoe String, "'Tis copper lace, man, never doubt me! Come look for yourself, you would have it 'twas gold. 'Tis my wager, and Jack you owe me two pound ten!"

A prolonged hissing, as of a brood of tortured serpents, together with some booing, baaing, and cat-calling, reminds these gentlemen that their conduct is undemocratic. And so with sundry frets and jars, Prologue proceeds, and the three interlopers fall to cards, Shoe String assuring his comrades that he "never goes to the play to taste vain pleasures with a fantastic palate, but merely to fleet the hour somehow as a gentleman must."

Enter stage hands in red plush, bearing a small portable house and a Tower of London, which informs us in the language of symbols that we are in the heart of the mighty metropolis.

They withdraw. Prologue withdraws. Then enters the Earl of Lincoln in conversation with the Lord Mayor of London.

"My Lord Mayor, you have sundry times
Feasted myself and many courtiers more,
Seldom or never can we be so kind
To make requital of your courtesy."

"Tell me, my Lord Mayor," interjects Red Plume from the floor, "when are we to have another play by Master Dekker? I infinitely prefer his style to this of Master Shakespeare."

"But this play *is* by Master Dekker!" exclaims the aggrieved impersonator of the Lord Mayor.

"Then," says Red Plume, "it must be Master Shakespeare's style that I so infinitely prefer."

(Moans, groans, baas, and cat-calls.)

"What was the last play we saw of Shakespeare's?" inquires Red Plume of Shoe String, "positively my favourite of all he hath done."

"Nay, 'Slid, I know not," Shoe String makes answer. "I have but a poor memory for these kickshaws."

"Let me assist your memory, dear knight," says Kissing Curl. "'Twas 'Hamlet,' the Moor of Venice."

(Tumult in the cockpit. Shouts of "A murrain on him! Hang him!" A voice: "Oh! for a stone-bow to hit him in the eye!")

During a lull in the storm the voice of the play Lord Mayor again becomes faintly audible:—

> "If it please you, Cousin Lacey, come
> To the Guildhall. He shall receive his pay
> And twenty pounds——"

"And I paid forty shillings," Red Plume is heard to exclaim, "for this very bonnet, and the rascal hatter assured me there was not such another in the universal world. To that end he perjured his immortal soul, and now we see that this Lord Lacey in the comedy wears just such another!"

But now the wrath of the cockpit bursts all bounds. Howls, hoots, cat-calls, foul language for nigh five minutes.

Dekker, the poet, livid with fury, dashes through the curtains, but is restrained from bodily assault—to the grievous disappointment of the cockpit—by the combined efforts of the Lord Mayor and the re-entering Prologue. Lord Lacey is apparently a poltroon, for he turns suddenly ashy pale.

"The red pest in your vitals!" howls Dekker, shaking his fist in Red Plume's face.

"Do you know me, vagabond?" sneers Red Plume, "do you know, vagabond, whom you are addressing, vagabond?"

"Ay, that do I!" bellows the poet. "I am addressing a saucy, lack-wit jack, a fleering, addle-pated, fantastic chough, a beggarlanded popinjay, new brought from Bedlam!"

"Yet you may like to know who I am," resumes Red Plume, with the air of one who can disclose revelations capable of overwhelming the whole tribe of poets, but he does not disclose his identity. A well-directed turnip hurled by the strong arm of a raw-boned Smithfield butcher effectually closes his right eye, whilst an apple projected by a sprightly greengroceress carries away amidst howls of delight the famous red-feathered bonnet that had cost forty shillings. It is now Dekker's turn to laugh, and indeed he does not seem the type of man to remain angry for long at a stretch. There are not wanting signs either that further mischief is brewing. A Billingsgate fish-vendor is perceived by an acute observer hewing from the ground with his jack-knife a slab of turf some two foot square. And now, while Kissing Curl retrieves the bonnet, Shoe String raises a delicate forefinger adorned with a great square ruby—so much costlier than diamond—to bespeak silence. There is an almost instant lull, for all are curious to know what form his apology can possibly take.

" Silly animals," he laughs at them, " silly animals ! "

And now Red Plume also regains his composure.

" Come Will, come Dickon, let's to the Tower to look at the lions. I am with child to see the creatures feed ! "

Wherefore the fishmonger discharges his turf. Unfortunately he is a less knowing hand than either the butcher or the greengroceress, or perhaps his missile is too heavy. He succeeds only in partially extinguishing the footlights. Red Plume would have been unwise to disregard this hint, so while the whole house roar as one man, " Away with thee, fool ! " he bows politely to the Justice and myself — a courtesy which we very pointedly disregard—and retires with Kissing Curl upon one arm and Shoe String on the other amidst a volley of foul, but quite imaginative execration.

The comedy is now played out without more ado, and when the last rhymed couplet brings us to the ' Exeunt Omnes,' Lacey, the Lord Mayor, and others of the cast, not forgetting the poet himself, come in for a well-merited salvo of applause.

I drink a cup with my new found friends. They assure me that London audiences are orderly as a rule, except upon Shrove Tuesday, when butchers and prentices are loosed in flood upon the town to break into overt acts of hooliganism. " No poet would be at the pains to compose verse and lyrics as well as they do were they not pretty generally accorded a sympathetic hearing. But it happens every now and again that a poet with a turn for satire has a flirt at this or that notorious witling or eccentric, and such folks are not always above taking a revenge by creating a disturbance during the performance of a play. Something of this sort, I fancy, was at the back of that silly interlude you witnessed this afternoon."

When I bid my friends good-bye twilight has fallen. My lackey obtains for me a boat at the Playhouse stairs, and I bid the waterman row out to midstream. Even at this late hour there is life upon the water. A giant carrack is unlading at a wharf above the bridge. From beneath the painted awning of a little three-oared pleasure boat, the warbling of a singing boy and the throb of viols come to me deliciously across the waves. A faint sickle moon, trembling in the windy heavens, silvers the mighty spire of St Lawrence Poultney and a thousand spires and pinnacles whose names are unknown to me.

I lie back in the stern of the wherry, muffled warmly in my cloak. The windows of the gabled and battlemented Strand cast glowing reflections in the stream. The lights from the bridge houses flicker across the swell of the rapids where they race the bridge, and burn in a myriad seething, yellow eddies.

In the mighty panorama that I behold this night ' standardisation ' plays no part. No two houses tally either in shape or design : each one of all betrays the craftsman's joy in his labour, enshrines the individual, constructional idea. Here, if it exist anywhere upon the earth, is that poetic vision realised of ' infinite variety.'

I disembark once more upon the Southwark side, and fall to pacing the streets till dark. I sup late at a tavern, and brooding by the fire smoke my churchwarden until the first stroke of midnight. My host then furnishes me a guide to conduct me to my own hostelry of the ' Bear,' a small shock-headed sleepy lad who tumbles up from his flock mattress and oak pillow-slip, and walks before us with a lantern.

We have not gone two streets before a patrol of the night-watch, bearing those dirty axes which they call ' brown

bills ' from the red rust upon them, challenge us, and bellow to me to stand.

For a moment I experience a feeling of the most intense indignation. Am I, a Londoner, to be challenged in a London street as though I were some alien enemy in time of war? Then I reflect that in this city no one from the Sovereign down to the meanest of his subjects, ventures abroad without a weapon, and a watch armed with axes may, after all, be a necessary precaution in these scantily lighted streets where there is no means of knowing what blackguardry may be afoot.

The little boy is plucking me by the cloak.

" Speak French," he whispers hoarsely, " they don't arrest foreigners."

" Stand ho ! " roars the chief watchman, raising his lantern to examine this night wanderer at close quarters, while the rest of the party lower the spear-heads of their brown bills as though to run me through the body should I endeavour to make away.

" My master is French," cries the urchin.

" Je ne vous connais pas," cry I, taking my cue from the child, " mêlez vous de vos affaires, espèce de chameau."

And so the chief watchman sums the matter up for the benefit of his colleagues.

" A stranger," saith he sagely ; " as he knoweth not our tongue, he cannot rightly be expected to take his examination. Pass, friend," he concludes waggishly, " and the Devil go with you ! "

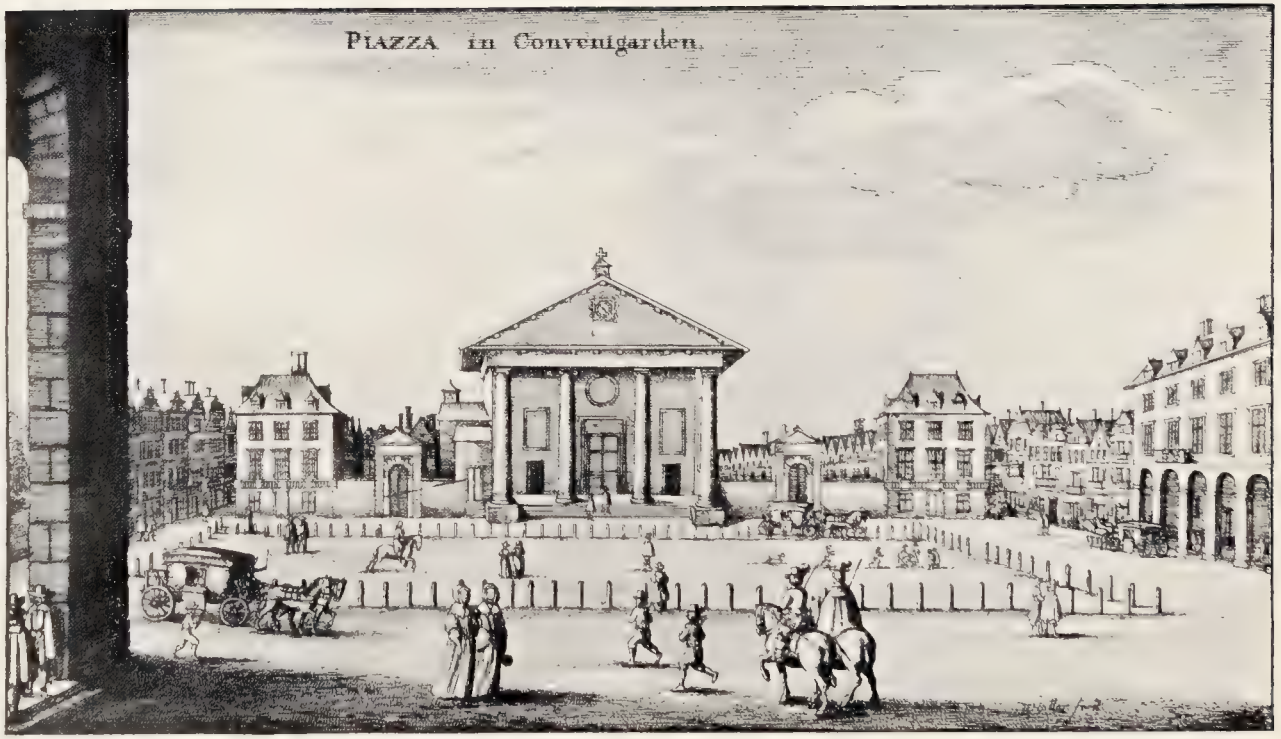
I give this knowing urchin two shillings and a sixpence, with which the lad might buy his mother for her kitchen, were he so minded, one heron, or two fat geese, or twelve chickens for boiling, or thirty blackbirds to bake in a pie, or sixty-five skylarks, or one hundred and fifty new-laid

eggs! I knock up the 'Bear,' call for a pillow-drink, and within a few moments fall fast asleep.

I awake in the twentieth century, well content. For the twentieth century also has a charm all its own and amply repays study.

# CHAPTER VI

## A Man about Town Three Centuries Ago




LONDON AT THE TIME OF PEPYS—THE PIAZZA, COVENT GARDEN

*(From the engraving by Wenceslaus Hollar)*

## *A Man about Town Three Centuries Ago*

OUR SCENE is a bedchamber in the gilded purlieus of Soho Square. It is furnished with a refinement of luxury which to the gentlemen of the Elizabethan epoch would have appeared astonishing. The oak-panelled walls are hung with paintings by Van Dyck, but this preference for the academic does not wholly exclude the moderns, and a shepherdess by Sir Peter Lely is advantageously displayed in the mullioned recess above the chimney-piece, this last a notable piece sculptured with fruits and foliage by Grinling Gibbons. The floor is of tessellated woodwork after the mode newly introduced from Paris. The dressing-table is carpeted, and the Venetian glass mirror which hangs above it reflects amidst other handsome toys, blue china, plate of gold and silver, and candlesticks of crystal.

Upon the little side-table by the bed a wig-block is well-nigh covered from view by that immense machine, the full-bottomed wig. Upon one of the ' Jacobean ' chairs, a leisurely coxcomb of a valet occupies himself with placing out in readiness his master's morning costume. He adjusts ruffles and ribbons, and gives a final furbish to the hilt of that deadly rapier which is as integral a portion of his master's wearing apparel as his buckled shoes, or walking cane, or the famous wig itself. This done, he approaches the great state bed, unties the laces of the scarlet and yellow damask hangings, places the steaming chocolate upon the

side-table, and coughs to announce to the sleeper that ' on a servi.'

My lord, his nightcap drawn closely over his shaven pate, rouses himself from his dreams and consults his watch. Yes, it's eight o'clock, past. (Mr Pepys, the diarist, who has a rush of work on just at present, has been perched at his desk at the Navy Office since five o'clock, but my lord could not be expected to know this, or indeed did he know it, to be in the least degree affected by this item of information. My lord is no Samuel Pepys, ' nor none of his relations.')

His valet assists him into his brocaded dressing-gown, and presents him with the morning's post upon a silver tray. The letters which come to this elegant apartment do not arrive by vulgar post. They were never bawled over by porters or suffocated in the post boys' mail bags. No, gorgeous flunkeys deliver them personally at the door, obsequious rainbows who in their very obsequiousness contrive to convey more than a hint of patronage and condescension. These missives are penned upon gilt-edged paper, elegantly scented and sealed with the reddest of wax, but since their composition has not been entrusted to secretaries, their grammar and spelling are often sadly to seek. Sometimes their fair composers make the French tongue the vehicle of their emotions, and in these cases the grammar and spelling are sadder and farther to seek.

Amidst the fragrant pile my lord detects one epistle of coarser fibre, a dunning letter obviously, in the too familiar handwriting of his wig-maker, a stowaway which has contrived to smuggle itself in amongst the Quality. This he singles out for destruction, ignites at one of the wax tapers in its crystal socket, and deposits thoughtfully upon the far corner of the silver tray. The labours of the opening day may now be regarded as fairly entered upon. My lord must

answer his correspondence, and certain of his replies will be accompanied by some trifling testimony of his esteem, with one a pocket looking-glass, with another some essences in a phial. A pair of perfumed gloves accompanies a third, and with a fourth will be despatched, in an elegant 'cheyne' box, some apricot paste from Paris. Over a fifth he sighs deeply, this must tell of a grand passion, for it calls for a pair of Parisian ear-rings and a diamond which will not sparkle less brightly for having endured the fogs of Lombard Street.

My lord rises from bed, gathers about him the folds of his dressing-gown, and takes his seat in the tapestry-backed chair before the fire which is now beginning to burn up merrily. My lord calls "Page!" and the page presenting himself is sent off to find the valet who, pending his master's literary labours, has been breakfasting upon radishes, bread and butter, and a can of small beer. The valet enters and ushers in a variegated group of sartorial subordinates, amongst them a tailor, shoemaker, seamstress, hosier, and perruque-maker.

The tailor has brought his newest creation, a 'most accomplished' suit of clothes, but the pocket, my lord avows is "too high by a foot." Vain for the trembling tailor to protest, "if it had been an inch lower it would not have held your lordship's pocket-handkerchief."

"Rat my packet-handkerchief," retorts the great man, "have not I a page to carry it? You may make him a packet up to his chin a-purpose for it, but I will not have mine come so near my face!" The tailor is meekly muttering when the curtain is brusquely rung down upon him.

"Death and eternal tartures, sir, I say the packet is too high by a foot. Therefore get me another suit with all manner of expedition, for this is my eternal aversion!"

The shoes " aren't ugly," and so, although they pinch him, he will take them. With his ' Steenkirk,' the elaborate neckcloth of the day, he protests himself ' in love,' but his new perruque evokes less tender emotions.

" Gad's curse ! sir, you don't intend to put this upon me for a full periwig ! "

" Not a full one, my lord ! I don't know what your lordship may be pleased to call a full one, but I have crammed twenty ounces of hair into it ! Why, your honour's side face is reduced to the tip of your nose ! "

" My side face may be in eclipse for aught I know, but I am sure my full face is like the full moon," and he enunciates his final philosophy of periwigs. " A periwig to a man should be like a mask to a woman : nothing should be seen but the eyes ! " So the wig must be augmented with yet more hair lest my lord show a pair of cheeks so " manstrous " that the " Tawn " should mistake him for a trumpeter !

The hosier receives a rebuff, and is warned that the calves of the next pair of stockings must be the " thickness of a ' crawn ' piece less." Vain the hosier's attempts at flattery.

" My lord, my thinks they look vastly well."

" Ay," says my lord, " but you are not so good a judge of these things as I am, I have studied them all my life ! "

And now the ' fatigue of the morning ' being over, the ' men of business ' are dismissed. To-day my lord is energetically inclined, and so with his valet's assistance he ' huddles into his clawthes,' and within two hours and a half he is attired completely, and stepping into his coach, is conveyed from princely Soho to the gates of St James's Park, which King Charles has generously thrown open to the public.

Here my lord meets friends. They exchange the gossip of the day, and strolling in a body to the lake, side-glass the

curious water-fowl which the King and the Duke of York are regaling with corn and bread. The grotesque pelican, brought from Astrakhan by the Russian ambassador, finds himself no longer ' in the wilderness ' but in ' Tawn,' and is made the butt of sundry unseemly gibes.

A creature that attracts more sympathetic comment is the Balearic crane from the Balearic Islands, whose right leg a short while back sustained so complicated a fracture that an operation was deemed advisable. He now stalks hither and thither with a substitute leg and thigh of boxwood, the knee joint of which has been contrived so craftily that he is apparently unaware that there has been any modification of his anatomy.

While the King feeds the pelican my lord takes stock of his costume, comments mentally that it drags lamentably after the mode, and that the royal tailor deserves the bastinado.

While the fowls are feeding, the cluster of courtiers are collecting unnoticed about the royal brothers. The King now becomes aware of them for the first time, converses with them in his naturally agreeable fashion so that none of them feel excluded, and then feels in his fob and glances at his watch. My lord knows this gesture of his. Now is the time for those who have petitions to present them, for this little trick is the prelude to one of those ferocious walks in which his Majesty delights. A walk of two hours to three is not unusual with him, and languid spirits soon grow exhausted.

To-day no petitions are presented. The walk is proposed. It is not the first time that my lord has been drawn with repugnance into the vortex. Recognising that flight is impossible, he bows with seeming goodwill, inwardly wishing all pedestrianism at the Devil, or that etiquette

would permit a sedan and relays of sinewy chairmen, for those who have for this species of locomotion an ' eternal aversion.' The ordeal, however, proves this morning less agonising, and two hours only, though far more than is reasonable, suffice to return the party to the pool of the water-fowl.

But another horror is in store. His Majesty proposes tennis, and for one portentous moment his eye rests upon my lord. My lord, powdering his sweating brow with his puff, appears lost in contemplation of the Balearic crane. The Duke of York and Sir Charles Sedley and my Lord Rochester, the King's boon companions, step forward. The four is made up. Saved ! But my lord is taking no more risks. He melts into the landscape, resplendent as a rainbow, stealthy as a phantom, and is not reassured until he distinguishes at the Park gates his equipage and retinue.

His two running footmen, after the manner of their kind, are sucking respectively an orange and a lemon, which fruits they are in the habit of fitting into the knobs of the gilded wands they carry. In this fashion they have wherewithal to refresh themselves when running before their master's coach through the ill-drained, ill-lighted London streets. The coach is of the new type, the so-called ' glass coach,' which takes its name from the handsome glass window which is beginning to supplant the older-fashioned open lattice. The new mode, however, is not without its disadvantages, for the glass when new-cleaned looks for all the world like the old open space. Only the other day the beautiful Lady Peterborough, forgetting this latest development, thrust her head through the glass and cut her forehead shockingly. . . .

Yes, my lord's coach with its red paint and brocaded cushions looks comfortable enough after that interminable

walk. He pauses for a moment to fondle the nose of the off-leader, one of his four grey Flanders mares of a breed beloved by the ' Ton ' for the peculiar elegance with which they trot. The four stout little mares are none too many considering the weight of the coach and the state of the roads.

Should my lord take it into his head to go a voyage into the country, those savage regions which lie beyond the ' Tawn,' he must turn his coach and four into a coach and six. He must likewise mount a goodly posse of domestics, grooms, footmen, porters, lackeys, who may be required for putting their shoulders to the wheel if the coach show signs of sinking into a quagmire. For country roads are frequently only distinguishable from the heaths which abut upon them by the uncertain line of slough.

Amongst the most essential members of his retinue will be that stout fellow, his ' life-guardsman,' not a soldier but a domestic in whom he places especial reliance. He will ride ahead as vanguard, his carbine slung ready to hand and loaded with ball to forestall any strategic manœuvring on the part of such gentlemen as Claude Duval or ' Swift Nick ' Nevinson, who may chance to be ' taking the air upon the heath ' this evening. In the rear of the cavalcade will come the so-called ' black guard ' (from which the term of abuse), and which will consist of the scullion, turnspit, and minor fry of the kitchen. A little army. Travelling, like marriage, is not to be undertaken lightly.

But thank Heavens—it is not above once a year that my lord visits his country manor yet standing in its old moat amongst the willow trees. He subjects himself to this periodic ordeal merely to assure himself that his estates have not flown away. The tenantry line both sides of the avenue as he approaches the great main entrance.

There sure enough is the village idiot, gaping at my lord who stares back quizzingly at him, either supposing the other to be the greater oddity. There, at a distance from the others, who give her a remarkably wide berth, stands an unfortunate more than half-suspected for witchcraft. The suspicious circumstance was her keeping her rosy country complexion during the recent local famine, when the rest of the village grew sallow and peaked—a fault not easily to be forgiven her by the envious and malignant of her own sex. My lord calls to mind the very simple explanation—she had collected all the snails from her patch of garden and salted them down for food. My lord must have her away to the town house or they will duck her yet. But how delightfully Gothic a story! How traditional, how full of historical interest—like the Tower of London! Quite "a fair tulip by the storm oppressed," reflects my lord as he surveys her, but rat me if I shall ever be enabled to set eyes upon her without associating her complexion with snails and speculating as to the exact quantity which she may have consumed!

The coach draws up before the great entrance, the tenantry lining both sides of the avenue. Old gossips 'God bless' him, but reserve their judgment. Village girls in red petticoats and waistcoats drop awe-stricken curtsies, while smock-frocked peasants gaze upon this London magnifico, their jaws dropping, their eyes goggling, for all the world as though he has tumbled out of the moon. He descends from his coach, chucks the prettiest girl under the chin (not Snails, for Snails has departed amidst a torrent of curses and is no more visible), and smiles beneficently upon the assembled throng through his lorgnette. So dreams my lord reminiscently, contrasting country manners with those of 'Tawn.'

But at this actual moment of our history my lord's coach stands by the gates of St James's Park. He steps in, the footman claps to the door and leaps up behind, the running footmen set off at a good round pace, and the four grey mares follow, stepping daintily withal and mincingly like deer in a nobleman's park.

Ah! this is better than the country! Why visit the country ever, except in the direst emergencies? Why quit Rome for her dependent provinces? Surely to do so is an error of taste! Even at Tunbridge or Bath Wells, where the ploughman's fist is, as it were, more manicured, does one ever set eyes on a shepherdess who for wit or a merry eye can hold a farthing candle to Nelly Gwynn in her part of 'Astraea' in that racy pastoral the 'Constant Nymph'?

At this point in his meditations a violent jolt well-nigh shakes my lord from his seat. The coachman on turning a corner has plunged unexpectedly into a party of strapping wenches who have refused to forgo their game of football for all the adjurations of the running footmen. The goalkeeper, a ruddy-faced oyster wench who keeps a stall in Thames Street on Wednesdays and Fridays, has made matters worse by kicking the ball through a sash window. The coachman urges with ridiculous warmth that football is a game that should be only played in fields. The oyster wench maintains with yet greater fervour that the accident is due to the coachman's bursting into the midst of them like a mad bull and giving no warning. The running footmen protest that they *did* give due warning, and now the citizen whose window has been broken joins the wordy warfare, elbowing his way viciously forward with demands for compensation.

"Drive on, coachman!" Coachman drives on and sets down his master at Lockit's, the ordinary where he will dine.

He dines without removing his head-gear, and his seat, which still survives an academic relic in many public-houses, has no back to it. The finger-bowl is handed about for guests to dip their fingers, for even at this late date you will find no fork unless you bring your own, and must rely upon the thumb and first two fingers of the left hand when you manipulate the roast, while the King himself will use but one knife and fork however many courses his cooks prepare him. To-day when forks appear in so great plenty that it was possible for Mr Salteena in Miss Ashford's novel to be 'a little flustered' with them, it will be seen that the finger-bowl is largely a delicate survival which has outlived its use.

Dinner is served at one o'clock, and as my lord's breakfast was his cup of chocolate, and as his supper will be a slice of beef or simply bread and Cheddar cheese with his wine, he may be excused for proving himself a trencherman now. "The English," says an observant Frenchman, "are very sober at night, but gluttons at midday." The citizens are not so very sober by modern standards nor courtiers by the standard of citizens. There are exceptions, of course. The philosophic Mr Hobbes, whom my lord has often seen at Court and whom he rather inclines to respect for his readiness at repartee, is an advocate for temperance. He even boasts that he has not been incapably drunk above a hundred times in his life; but can one always trust these literary men? My lord thinks not, they let their imaginations run away with them. The dinner-drink is Burgundy, that 'golden generous Burgundy' cried up by the wits. The dishes are various. There is soup, for example, served sometimes first and sometimes in the middle of a repast, there is no particular ruling. The nobleman pleases himself; the citizen has never seen the dish.

There is ' Bœuf à la Mode,' and upon a side buffet a plentiful variety of dishes from which guests may select at will. There are lobsters, a lamprey pie, a fricassee of rabbit and chicken, neats' tongues, roast pigeons, mutton. Dinner over, my lord and his noble companions dip the corners of their napkins in a second finger-bowl and clean their teeth with them.

He glances at the news sheet, ' Mercurius Politicus ' (Editor, Daniel Defoe, who has not yet achieved renown with ' Robinson Crusoe '). This editor gives to the most everyday occurrences a humorous twist.

" This morning," my lord informs himself, " there was killed in Budge Row a woman by an unruly ox."

" Yesterday afternoon there was robbed on the heath by Hampstead, Captain Jackson. But seeing that he was bound for a dissenting conventicle, the less is the pity."

" Yesterday evening there was robbed on the Downs by Epsom, Colonel Walters and his lady, of seventy-two pounds in gold, and a watch. The highwayman returned the watch. . . . The lady entreated that he would return the watch as it had been a wedding present, which he did, with this severe reprimand : ' You hid this watch, Madame, in the hope that I should not find it. When will the world grow honest ! ' "

In another number of the journal his eye lights upon a singular advertisement :—" The excellent, and by all physicians approved, China drink called by the Chineans teha, by other nations tay, alias tea, is sold at the Sultaness Head, a coffee-house in Sweetings Rents by the Royal Exchange, London."

An amateur of new sensations, he inquires of his immediate circle if any of them are acquainted with this

new Chinean wine? One very hide-bound old fellow characterises the drinking of tea as 'a filthy custom,' a 'base, unworthy Indian practice which no Christian family should admit.' This unlucky reference to the 'Christian family' is so oddly reminiscent of Puritanism and Regicides, and the late departed but not regretted 'Old Noll,' that the three-bottle gentlemen in his vicinity begin to 'smoke' him. One spruce little exquisite, a sort of love-in-a-mist hung about with quantities of coloured ribbons at shoulders, breast, knees, and sword hilt, and wearing his laced hat with that aggressive tilt which they call the 'Monmouth Cock,' proclaims that he has already purchased for thirty shillings a little packet of the Chinean leaves and proposes to put the beverage to the proof that very evening after supper. He adds, side-glassing the erring Roundhead in his most killing manner, "As well die of tea as love!"

But another gentleman, who has some slight acquaintance with physic, protests with evident amusement that the company is under a misapprehension. One does not drink tea for pleasure, as one drinks Burgundy, but as a medicine against 'colds and defluxions.' One drinks brandy afterwards as a corrective.

My lord consults his watch. He had projected a visit to his favourite coffee-house at St James's, but the discussion as to 'tay alias tea' and the news sheet with its killing gossip of highwaymen and women done to death by oxen, has kept him too long. His secretary has bespoken him a seat for the play so he departs, and his coach conveys him away to the 'King's House' to see Mrs Bowtell play 'Melantha.'

His choice lies between the 'King's House' and the 'Duke's,' no more, for the mass of the people are not yet emancipated from the Cromwellian interdict. Cits no

longer go to the play, which certainly makes it more refined. "The Puritans," my lord will inform you, "dismantled alike the Southwark Bear Pit and the 'Globe' theatre, where Shakespeare had performed in 'Hamlet.' Players were whipped at the cart's tail and the bears were shot, for the sectaries did not nicely discriminate between the two types of performers."

The comedies in which my lord more particularly delights are not only reprobated by Puritans, but by all those who dislike the idea of a writer's going to truth for inspiration when he might so much more easily repair to the copious and abundant fountains of evasiveness and humbug.

The audience being drawn exclusively from the higher social strata cannot present themselves in sufficient numbers to make long runs possible. A run of eight days is reckoned a singular achievement. But then a playwright may always supplement his takings by the dedication, and whenever a poet extols the divine perfections of my lord and his god-like ancestors, he repays the foresighted compliment with the traditional purse of guineas, unless indeed my lord's tenants prove rogues, or the shopkeepers become extortionate in the prices they exact for sweet powder or bouquets.

The central dome of the playhouse is still open to the sky, but women take the parts that would formerly have been played by boys. The new movable Italian scenery has rendered obsolete the older curtains and placards, and tallow dips have given place to chandeliers of bright wax lights.

My lord sits pensively combing his periwig with his ivory pocket comb, but brightens considerably upon spying a lady of his acquaintance, the very lady to whom this

morning he despatched the pot of apricot paste with its touching letter. He rises and bows in that gracefully acrobatic style which Dryden so well hits off :—

> " Another's diving bow he did adore
> Which, with a shog, casts all the hair before,
> Till he, with due decorum, brings it back,
> And rises with a water-spaniel shake."

The lady is not proof against these blandishments, and he follows up his advantage by purchasing a paper of oranges from an orange wench at sixpence apiece. He is too much a man of the world to pay the official price of twopence apiece, for he knows that to do so would be to expose himself to the orange wench's back chat, at which popular exercise however pithy his replies, if the girl be a favourite with the many, the laugh will be against him. These oranges he now presents to his fair friend, who creates no manner of astonishment by lolling in his lap until they have consumed the fruit between them. Somewhere at the back of the house, in a blue suit with gold buttons (' and pray God he can pay the bill ! ') sits Mr Pepys, the diarist. The morning's stress at the Navy Office has kept him too late to secure so good a seat as he could have desired, but his enthusiasm for the play rises superior to this inconvenience, and even to a ferocious draught which keeps catching him in the back of the neck. It is so dark where he is sitting that he experiences difficulty in jotting down his customary memoranda : " . . . the stage is a thousand times better and more glorious than ever before." He looks with pride at the new Italian scenery, and the far-off, twinkling wax lights. He notes thoughtfully : " All things now are civil, no rudeness anywhere. . . ." The lady sitting immediately in front of him turns round, and not perceiving

him in the gloom, spits unexpectedly full in his face. This, too, he chronicles, with the charitable codicil: "Which I minded the less, she being a pretty woman."

The play over, my lord wastes an agreeable quarter of an hour waiting upon the lady to whom he had despatched the apricot paste and dallying with her at the door of her sedan. Then he departs in his coach to look in on his old friend Sir Robert Carr. At Sir Robert's he finds an acquaintance of long standing in a certain Tom Porter, who had been a Gentleman Commoner of his own year at the University, and with whose fighting cocks my lord's were wont to fight Homeric battles in those studious days when they were both improving their minds. With Tom sits Sir Henry Bellases; the two are proverbial for boon companions, one hardly ever sees them apart.

Though it is above three hours and a half since dinner, these gentlemen, with some ten or a dozen more, are still sitting over the bottle. Tom and Sir Henry are talking together a little loudly, Burgundy sometimes has that effect, but in perfect geniality and good fellowship, when some meddling interloper from the far end of the room takes upon himself to exclaim "What! Are they quarrelling that they talk so high?"

"No!" cries Sir Henry, thinking to quash this busybody, "I never quarrel but I strike, and take that as a rule of mine!"

"How!" cries Tom, always hot-headed, "strike! I would I could see the man in England who durst give me a blow!" And with that Sir Henry, his nerves already exasperated by this officious tattler's impertinence, and construing this vague declaration into a particular challenge levelled at himself, gives Tom a box on the ear.

They are parted, of course, but it is clear that matters

cannot end thus. By and by Tom leaves the dining-room and strolls out into the street, and my lord upon a glance from his host follows, after a short interval, on the chance that he may be able to smooth over a delicate situation. He realises, however, his inability to cope with it, and after one rebuff drops back into the less invidious rôle of passive spectator. Tom has not been walking a moment before he chances upon Dryden the poet, of whom he borrows his link boy, acquainting him briefly with his reason for so doing, and with the cause of the quarrel.

"Wait until to-morrow," counsels Dryden, when he hears with astonishment upon how slight an occasion the debate has arisen.

"To-morrow!" cries Tom in a fume, "To-morrow! Why to-morrow they will make us friends, and then the blow will rest upon me!" So Dryden leaves this infuriated gentleman, for he is mentally revising some lines from his translation of Virgil, and his thoughts are busy with the doings of another swashbuckler—Aeneas.

So Tom posts the boy as look-out, and retires to a coffee-house to await developments. By and by the urchin comes running back with the news that Sir Henry Bellases has left Sir Robert Carr's, and is coming this way in his coach. Tom steps forth from his ambush, and bars the road. The pair are at this time by Covent Garden market. It is already dusk, not many people in the streets.

Sir Henry asks from the window: "You will not hurt me coming out?"

"No," cries Tom.

So Sir Henry descends, draws, and throws away the scabbard.

"Are you ready?" cries he. The other gives assent. They fight, and Tom runs Sir Henry through the body.

Sir Henry calls to him, "Tom!" he cries, and Tom runs up, and Sir Henry kisses him.

"Tom," cries he hugging him, "thou hast hurt me, but I will make a shift to stand upon my legs till thou may'st withdraw and the world not take notice of thee, for I would not have thee troubled for what thou hast done."

But Tom with a laugh, but choking, shows Sir Henry how he, too, is wounded, and the blood oozing out through his shirt frills. . . .

Later my lord learns that the surgeons give Tom a week or a trifle longer. With Sir Henry it is only a question of hours. His lady has sent for the priest. Such is etiquette. They were extraordinary good friends. . . .

My lord departs less moved than one might fancy, for the possibility of a violent death is a conception never far from a gentleman's imagination. He is familiar with it from boyhood up. This chance might have befallen him or any of his friends, and he reasons, no doubt, as will a later nobleman, that "manners are to some societies what morals are to others, their cement and their security."

My lord takes coach away home again and dresses once more, in earnest this time, for an evening at Whitehall. He enters the great chamber, and pausing for a moment, for a song is being sung, he surveys the scene which the brilliant costumes of the great ladies render a vista of fairyland, and which their rivalries convert into an arena where gladiators strike out or gasp their last.

The King keeps open house for all, bar the openly professed opponents of his government. He has associated himself with the scientific meetings of the Royal Society, and is himself a tolerable 'chymist' and anatomist. He has shown his interest in music by his relish for Purcell, and by his paying for the musical education of the promising

Pelham Humphrey. Playwrights from the ' King's House ' and the ' Duke's ' drop in at Whitehall to study their models from the life. Occasionally an actor will be gratified with a Court costume in which to personify some preposterous potentate in a rhymed tragedy by Mr Dryden. Charles Stewart saunters amidst the bustle like the genial gentleman host of some well appointed tavern, a man " whose manners " a contemporary bishop remarked as " never sufficiently to be commended . . . a perfectly well-bred man, easy of access, free in his discourse, sweet in his whole deportment."

The singing boy is rendering the last verse of the King's song to the accompaniment of two ladies upon guitars, for all these great dames profess a taste for music, and a guitar is as indispensable an adjunct of the toilet-table as the rouge or patch-box.

> " But when I consider the truth of her heart,
> Such an innocent passion, so kind without art,
> I fear I have wronged her and hope she may be
> So full of true love to be jealous of me.
> And then 'tis, I think, no joys are above
> The pleasures of love."

My lord, who has paused upon the threshold, now enters and joins in the general murmur of applause.

In the sconces which project from the satin-hung walls, the wax candles have been lighted, and the fine world is absorbed by the prevailing card game of basset.

The costumes of the great ladies of my lord's acquaintance are stiff with brocade and cloth-of-gold. Their bodices, low cut to show the milky whiteness of the skin, cross-lace with knots of ribbon and jewelled brooches. Above the curve of the bodice and between its cross-lacing appear the frills of that peculiarly feminine garment the tucker, a toy

designed alike to excite and frustrate the reprehensible curiosity of the periwigged Peeping Tom. The long and wide sleeves are looped up with jewels so that the eye cannot miss the cambric undersleeve richly embroidered or trimmed with old lace. It is the mode to call attention to some particular beauty of cheek, chin, or brow by means of a black patch in the shape of a star, a heart, a diamond, or even of a diminutive coach. The hair is arranged for preference in a quantity of flaxen ringlets which, seen from a distance, convey the impression of an artless, even childish innocence, an impression which a nearer approach disposes one to modify.

My lord has for partner the captivating Miss Stewart, who whispers him that Lady Castlemaine, at the table next but one to theirs, has been playing since morning, and has already lost thirteen thousand pounds. Lady Castlemaine rises, turns her chair for luck, and protests with 'a good mouth-filling oath' that she will continue the play or pawn Whitehall and all it contains.

To young Miss Stewart Lady Castlemaine extends much complacent patronage. Confident in her own power over the King, she cannot realise what all else know that that power is already weakening. Could this benighted creature dare to set itself up for her rival in the King's affections?

Yet the more business-like playwrights are forgetting to dedicate their works to the Castlemaine, for Cupid is a comedian, and the heroines of comedy are usually *young*. There *was* a time when John Dryden, the laureate, had compared her (whether for her meddlesomeness, vindictiveness, avarice, or spasmodic outbursts of termagant fury does not appear) with the grave Roman senator Cato. Loud must have been the laughter in Will's coffee-house when the thing appeared in print, and the first poet of the day

may well have wondered whether he had not pushed compliment too far.

But with the Castlemaine it was not easy to offend by flattery. The artful tints did not displease her when applied with a house-painter's brush; she could take the sweet, insinuating poison by the pottle-pot. When placing her idiot son at Oxford the royal courtesan had lounged for a mortal hour within her coach so as to give the natives leisure to peruse her charms, and learned men, curious in searching out what pertains to beauty as an abstract idea, had stared and stared, unexpectedly taken by it in its more concrete and tangible form.

It must be presumed, therefore, that some suave gentleman waited upon the laureate with a purse of gold upon her ladyship's behalf, as had the compliment been ill taken, it is no less certain that some hired nose-splitter would have fallen upon him in the obscurity of some alley when the taverns were closing.

Meanwhile Miss Stewart saps and mines with Scotch assiduity, and my lord who is well acquainted with the posture of affairs covertly occupies himself in surveying the young lady critically.

La belle Stewart's hair is fair and luxuriant; her skin a dazzling white; her eyes blue and lustrous; her features more perfectly regular, it is argued, than those of any woman of Europe of her day. Her figure all allow to be shapely to a degree. In the matter of intelligence, however, it must be confessed that Nature has gone to work upon a more thrifty scale, and la belle Stewart's tastes have never quite emancipated themselves from the nursery.

Lady Castlemaine, not prepared to vacate the field without a struggle, it is said, has taken to herself paid spies, bribing them to dog her rival night and day in the

hope of detecting her in any escapade which may prejudice her in the King's esteem. But the young lady is either unnaturally cold or uncannily crafty. Besides, in rare moments of stress, her line of defence, though simple, is adequate. With tears in her beautiful eyes, she proposes immediate flight to a convent, and as no one can be quite positive she is not in earnest, the hearts of men melt within them as they think what a pity it would be to waste her.

Her weapon of attack is youth. Does Lady Castlemaine propose a game of basset? La belle Stewart, fixing her gaze abstractedly upon that ghost of a double chin, which her rival's cunning can no longer lay, will cry aloud not for cards but 'Hunt the Slipper' or 'Blind Man's Buff.' The thoughtful and learned are not the last to precipitate themselves forward at her appeal, and as in the days of the patriarchs, the mountains skip like rams.

Those ladies who have wit, pertness, or vivacity display these commodities. To this class belongs Nell Gwynn. Upon one occasion, when entertaining the King and the Duke of York to supper and music in her lodgings in Pall Mall, she begs the King, who has expressed himself delighted with the performers, to show that he does not speak like a courtier by presenting "these poor people with a gratuity."

The King, feeling in his pocket, declares he has no money, and turning to the Duke of York asks him if he has any.

"No, sir," replies the Duke. "I believe not above a guinea or two." Whereupon Nell, mimicking the King's drawl to admiration, exclaims, "Odd's Fish! What company have I got into!"

Mrs Hyde is too fatigued to say such things. She and Madame Middleton fall back upon *languor*, as who should

say, " I could wither you with superior repartee, but really, is it worth the effort ? " And to yawn very slightly in reply to an epigram, or perhaps close the eyes altogether, may be a retort as telling as a blow with a bludgeon. Both these ladies could be languid throughout an earthquake.

But my lord will insist that the supreme languisher is the beautiful Madame Jane Middleton, and his friend de Grammont remarks in her " quelque chose de précieux et d'affecté "—*only* " quelque chose ! "

The Middleton sits to Sir Godfrey Kneller and to Sir Peter Lely. She sits, or rather lolls, to that modish master Nicolas Largillière. His portrait bears out another dictum of de Grammont. " The Middleton," says he, " is ' shapely, fair and white '—yet with an insolent languor which is not to everybody's taste."

You behold her in the master's picture, gazing absently upon a drawing-room sheep. In her hair, which is of the palest gold, she has set a rose, no tawdry, flaunting bloom as you may well imagine, her taste is for a delicate tea-rose, which seems to have caught itself in the act of blushing ever so slightly at discovering itself so pale this morning.

Her shimmering robes are indeterminate, neither quite pale green nor quite pale blue. A property shepherd's crook, not too coarse or heavy, rests lightly in the curve of her plump left arm, which, lest you might miss something of its symmetry and distinction, she has taken thought to adorn with a golden bangle, studded with prodigious pearls and rubies.

I picture her in Largillière's studio. Another fine lady entering accosts her thus : " How ! Madame, a shepherdess this morning ? "

" Lud, child," the Middleton makes answer, " to what wretched shifts are we of the Quality not now reduced !

You behold me the patrician guardian of this plebeian and prepasterous sheep! But I trust the creature will not so far forgot itself as to stray, for I propose immediately to fall asleep."

Certainly if affectation is ever to be called sublime, its sublimest exponent must be Madame Jane Middleton. . . .

My lord has been losing heavily at basset, but his composure is admirable, and he suffers no trace of his misfortunes to appear. My lord's losses have been due less to ill luck than to the feeble play of his distracting partner la belle Stewart, who now, after he has bowed and she curtsied, retires to an alcove where she sits pouting. She is speedily joined by a little throng of courtiers, amongst them the Duke of Buckingham—" chemist, fiddler, statesman, and buffoon," as his satirist has it, " a universal spirit with a prodigious scope of interests," as one fancies he may be styled by his friends.

Miss Stewart refuses to be consoled until the great man builds her a card castle. George Villiers calls for the packs, shakes back the frills from his wrists, and proceeds with steady fingers. At this untenacious architecture the Duke is a known proficient, and he succeeds better at it than in his attempt to discover the philosopher's stone. His airy palace attains under his deft fingers to the distinction of a sixth story. La belle Stewart claps her hands with considered enthusiasm, and, having artlessly assured herself that by so doing she has attracted the attention of the King, she presses with dainty finger tips a kiss upon the ducal lips.

His Majesty now saunters up with affected nonchalance, but savagely determines to build a card castle which shall make his great subject look no better than a fool, a card castle which shall be to that of George Villiers' what Christo-

pher Wren's cathedral now in prospect to go up shall be to a peasant's cot. My lord observes them at their grim-gay occupation out of the corner of a cynical eye—the Duke building now unstably, of set purpose, for fear of exasperating the King, the King with 'a countenance as he had lost some province,' la belle Stewart all smiles, and the Castlemaine her rival biting her lips till their rouge is tinctured with a yet more sanguine dye.

When my lord has been given his revenge, a revenge which leaves him poorer still, he rises with a fellow-cavalier. They bow together with 'the shog' that 'casts all the hair before,' and they rise at a moment with the 'water-spaniel shake,' a piece of ritual which they perform to their own unstinted admiration. The two companions saunter down the grand staircase, and as they pause for a moment, awaiting in the glare of the flambeaux the arrival of their sedans, my lord proffers the friend snuff, and the friend replies with a prune from a golden box.

But now the lackeys have succeeded in disinterring the chairmen, who are seen hastening forward wiping their mouths upon their sleeves, for they have forgathered in an ale-house hard by.

Our noblemen step in and the chairmen set stolidly forward with their loads. The link boys lead the way over the greasy cobbles, their torches casting eerie shadows beneath the struggling moon. The moon shines wanly enough, but still she shines, and therefore the lanterns, which on moonless nights glimmer faintly upon every third door in the main thoroughfares, cast no welcoming ray to-night. The lighting of London streets by means of lanterns at the doors of dwelling-houses had been agitated at a day when the battle of Agincourt was still a nine days' wonder. And yet, in this advanced world of tea and coffee,

snuff and tobacco, of the culture of King Charles and the comedy of the wits, street lighting is still obnoxious to the 'old-fashioned' and stoutly opposed.

These narrow streets, particularly in the dark, are full of peril. The ill-laid cobbles may wrench a chairman's knee out of joint, or sprain his ankle. Toughs and bullies of many types who go by the happily forgotten names of 'Nickers,' 'Scowrers,' or 'Mohocks,' infest by night this city of the shadows.

The watchman upon his hourly round, 'blessing the doors from nightly harm,' were wiser to bless the windows, for you can tell a 'nicker' from the jingle of copper coins in his pocket, small change which he carries for no other purpose than to break the windows of citizens against whom he has, or has not, a spite. Even ambassadors' windows are not inviolate, if the country or cause they represent be unpopular with that terrible entity, the London mob.

Beating the watch, of course, is one of those sports which have done so much to build up our national character. It is practised more particularly by diners-out, such as my lord, and a prison bench is no unusual bed for a gentleman. There is a strong freemasonry amongst diners-out, who lend each other mutual support if an attempt be made on the part of authority to arrest any of their number.

On these occasions the watchman summons his colleagues by means of that enemy to sleep, the rattle. If the diners-out defend themselves with their swords, a practice that has been known, it becomes incumbent upon the watchmen to beat these merry gentlemen to the ground with the long poles they carry, and a battle royal ensues, worthy of the classic outbreaks between the Guelphs and Ghibellines.

But the Mohock is the crowning terror of these midnight streets. Mohocks, the other night, fixed a party of women in wine barrels, and sent them rolling down Snow Hill. These ruffians would have found short shift could they have been brought to justice, but perhaps it was not a lantern night, for there was nobody to identify them. Mohocks are not content with beating watchmen; they have, so the citizens at least believe, many ingenious ways of inflicting wounds more serious than can be dealt by a cudgel.

But my lord and his merry friend meet with no unkindly fates. The continual groaning of the signs above the houses is a prelude to rain, and perhaps for this reason there are few people in the streets.

They see but one figure, an aged watchman, staggering, lantern in hand, a rheumatic will-o'-the-wisp. Upon closer view he is perceived to be escorting home a drunk, in anticipation of the fee of sixpence which custom allows in payment of this good office. The drunk is singing little Miss Davis's song of 'My lodging is on the cold ground,' and true enough he was in his lodging when the watchman found him.

The sedans are now set down before a fashionable tavern, where my lord and the friend will partake of a light collation, and half a dozen of Burgundy are called for to wash down the cold pigeon. When the last bottle is sent to join the dead men under the table, the pair sally forth once more into the windy streets, and nobly riding out the storm, my lord sets himself upon endeavouring to recall and render a love song of my Lord Rochester's, in which musical exercise he is assisted by the friend :—

"Give me a cup," chants the friend, "then—something —fill to the brim."

"Vast toasts on the delicious lake," prompts my lord.

"Oh! delicious! delicious!" observes the friend in prose. The friend, who so far has been only "swimming" like the toasts, begins to look a little in danger of capsizing. They ring the changes upon their ditty and, devoid of the social conscience, wake countless worthy souls who indulge the foolish habit of retiring early to bed.

Across the road, awakened by the din, a gentleman has raised himself in bed. He climbs down, walks to the window, plucks aside the curtains and stands there awhile listening. There is something sculpturesque about the lines of the face, the finely-arched eyebrows, the straight nose, the sensitive mouth, the whole cast of expression, delicate yet virile, and at this moment a thought scornful, even bitter. He wears his own hair, and the flaxen curls are tinged with grey. The effect of sculpture is increased by an oddly fixed look about the eyes, it is as though the listener were blind.

"Cupid and Bacchus," chants my lord, "my saints are. Let wine and love still reign."

"With wine," puts in the friend, "I wash away my care. Then—something—Steady! Rat me!—Love again."

The face of the citizen at the window has lost its expression of contemptuous scorn. It has become upon the sudden rapt, almost terrible. The lips are moving—

> "In Courts and Palaces he also Reigns
> And in luxurious Cities, where the noise
> Of riot ascends above their loftiest Tow'rs,
> And injury and outrage: And when Night
> Darkens the Streets, then wander forth the Sons
> Of Belial, flown with insolence and wine."

My lord, preoccupied with his unsteady friend, remarks nothing out of the common. With a magnificent concerted effort they manœuvre the corner of the street. They take the road to New Spring Gardens, where till a late hour

there will be music in the well-lighted banqueting-hall, and where, if the weather be not too unpropitious, in little green arbours beneath the stars one may regale the fair upon cheese-cakes, pastries, and 'syllabub'—wine sweetened with sugar and cream. Thither are our adventurers bound, mindful of romance, and romance they decidedly attain. My lord's cravat has acquired an unconscionable trick of hitching itself to his left ear. His friend, who bears an empty bottle beneath his left arm and will not be persuaded but that this is his hat, protests that—perhaps because it is midwinter—he cannot hear the nightingales! A quarrel as to whether the nightingales are or are not singing is smouldering to conflagration when a stranger approaches bearing a lantern.

The stranger's air is so excessively diplomatic that at any earlier hour it must have awakened suspicion. His appearance is uncommonly suggestive of a peace officer. His message, however, is at pleasant discord with his odious personality. Fragments of that message penetrate to the muddled brains. "A little supper . . . music . . . lodgings hard by . . . a lady well known to my lord, but prefers not to give her name. . . . Bring the friend. . . ."

Our nobleman, with a gesture of great dignity, unhitches the cravat from his ear to which it is once more clinging, his friend adjusts the bottle beneath his arm, and the pair follow their unknown conductor, stumbling a little against the molehills, "rat them, which were not here, rat them, yesterday at midday."

According to the Act, there are to be eleven thousand watchmen in the City. Every citizen is to take his turn of duty, and from sunset to sunrise he is to be constantly on the alert. But few are pedantic in their interpretation of their orders, and many feel more alert when in the ale-house than in pacing the streets.

This particular watchman is not more conscientious than his fellows, but *he has a grievance*. His hawk-like eye has detected in my lord the gentleman who in a recent street frolic denounced him as "a raw-headed republican dog," and heaved half a brick through his parlour window. But if my lord is a man of action this citizen will prove himself a diplomatist.

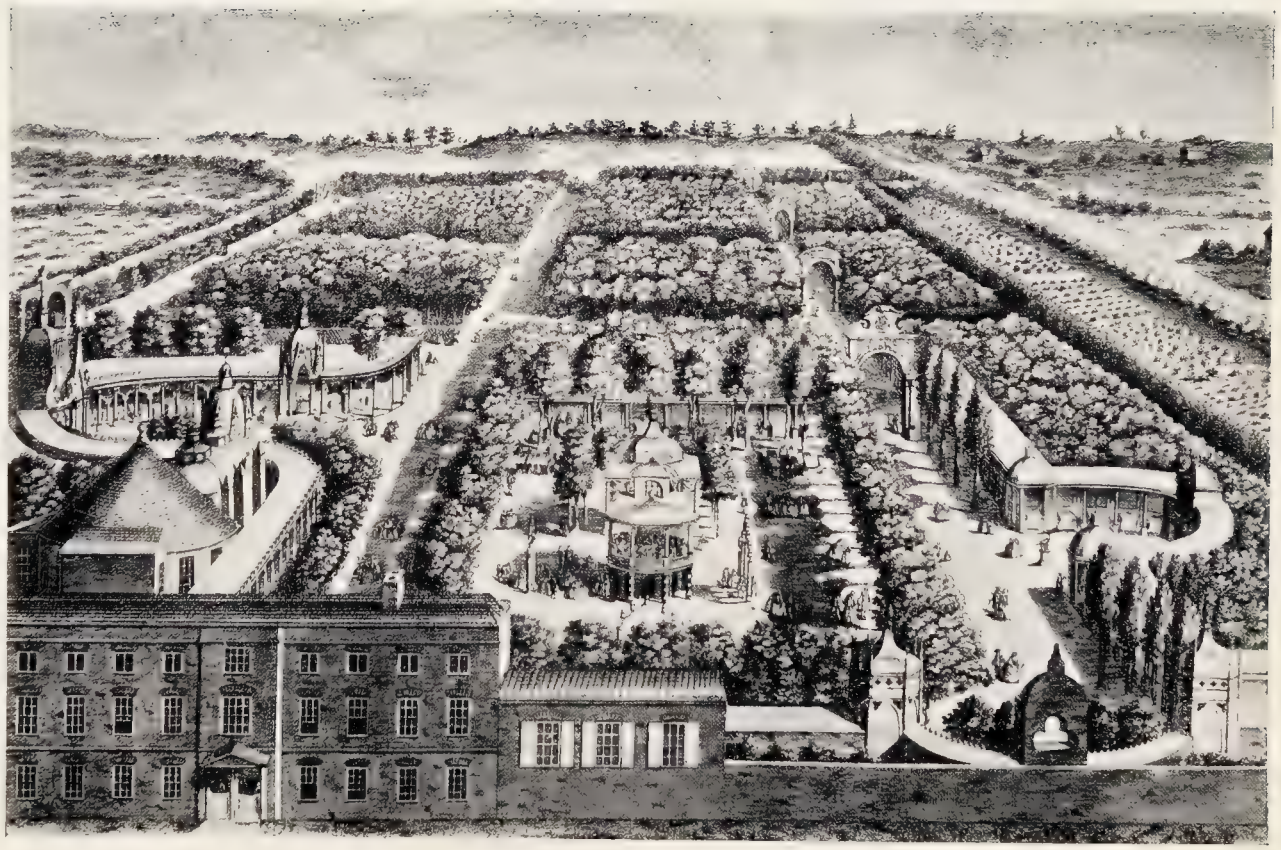
They reach the 'lodgings'; the stranger, producing a key of enormous size, obsequiously opens the door; it slams to behind them, and there is a rasping and creaking of bolts. They are in the lock-up! This shock notwithstanding, they laugh a little uproariously at this example of a citizen's raillery. They embrace with an oath, and when slumber overtakes them, the friend is still murmuring something about the nightingales.

My lord's confidential secretary will inquire him out and redeem him in the morning, which is what confidential secretaries are for, and explains why they have to be confidential. The question at this juncture may pertinently be raised as to whether my lord is exactly fitted to 'point a moral'?

Frankly, no; but isn't he admirably calculated to 'adorn a tale'?

# CHAPTER VII

## A Visit to London in the Eighteenth Century



GENERAL VIEW OF VAUXHALL GARDENS, 1751

*(From an engraving by J. S. Muller after a drawing by Wale)*

## *A Visit to London in the Eighteenth Century*

IF WHAT you tell me be true about the monstrous growth of London, then I think my reminiscences will entertain you. I can assure you it was a very different place in the seventeen-fifties from what upon your showing it must be to-day. I made a stay there of about six weeks, when a young fellow of nineteen, and from that time to this have dwelt continually in the country, so that what you write me of this vast expansion reads, my dear sir, like some fable from Dean Swift.

What! London is now all one with Westminster, so that scarce a landmark now witnesses to the immemorial division between Court and City! And those enchanting villages from which the milkmaids would tramp in with their pails of a morning, are they too vanishing? All on the brink of being engulfed and swallowed up? I remember Lambeth as a pretty market town, and a Hampstead and Highgate from which one might contemplate, like some eagle from his crag, the whole extent of the metropolis.

Marylebone was in my boyhood a brisk, thriving little hamlet a mile out of town. There were handsome country houses there and an attractive public garden, which made it a very favourite walk with us upon a Sunday or a holiday. Paddington Village lay two miles out, and Paddington Green: have you still some grass plot there, or does it survive only in that nursery song which associates it with Polly Perkins? There was at Paddington a natural spring

of mineral water, with real or imaginary tonic effects which made it greatly in request.

Pimlico was a pretty village enough, but not to be compared with Chelsea. Chelsea, I suppose, can still boast its old Stuart houses, but in my day it possessed but a single street, meandering pleasantly along by the Thames. Down this street, according to tradition, the Merry Monarch had rid often upon his visits to Nell Gwynn, and here, too, unless I am growing forgetful of my topography, yet stood the house that had been Nell Gwynn's mother's. Poor lady, hers was a tragic end! She fell into the ornamental water in her garden and drowned while overcome with brandy. An attraction at Chelsea was the coffee-house owned by one Salter, an ex-hairdresser, whom we grandiloquently christened 'Don Saltero.' The Don was something of an original. He had set up in his shop a museum. There were curios which he had purchased from gentlemen of the East India Company, and fossils and stuffed animals of every variety, and these he would display to us while we sipped our coffee, and make no extra charge.

Islington, gay delightful Islington, was famous for the theatre of Sadler's Wells. Islington I remember as a thriving market town two miles north-east. They gave us an alfresco entertainment the whole summer through, a continuous performance lasting from four in the afternoon till ten at night. We witnessed the entertainment from boxes which gave upon the arena, and lively parties were made up to view rope-dancers, tumblers, acrobats, ballet girls, and the fellows who would climb ladders head downwards with their heels in the air. There was no stated charge for the spectacle, you threw coins to the performers or not, as the spirit moved you. One was expected, of course, to order refreshments, but these did not cost us more than they would have

done elsewhere. Only the beer bottles of Sadler's Wells contained, I remember, one glass less than the bottles of the inns and taverns, a defect which gave rise to high language upon occasion.

In those days we all cursed and swore roundly upon the slightest provocation. A disposition to dem his eyes and those of all his acquaintance was an indispensable characteristic not only of the Beau, but of every gentleman who wore His Majesty's scarlet, and we, the younger fry, would imitate the fine gentlemen in the hopes of being thought sparkish.

But I am putting the cart before the horse, describing London to you without first giving you particulars as to my journey thither.

I set out on my voyage upon a post-coach from Dover, one of those light, compact, well hung, red-painted vehicles of the type they call 'Flying Machines' or 'Originals.' The day was Sunday, a day when all vehicular road traffic is ordinarily prohibited by police regulation, but a special permit was obtained without difficulty. Dover, in which neighbourhood we lived, was full to overflowing, many ships having been delayed in the port by weather, so the inn-keepers were at their wits' ends, and every one was heartily rejoiced to see the backs of us.

Our post-coach followed light as a feather in the wake of our six stout horses, in perfect condition. I remember a Frenchman, who made the journey in our company, protesting his astonishment at the gentleness with which the coachman treated his horses. He had been accustomed, as he frankly informed us, to regard us English as a very brutal race owing to our national predilection for sport, for fencing 'with the sharp,' for bull-baiting, pugilism, and the like. "But here," says he, "you have coachmen who

use their whips as our fine ladies of Paris do their fans, all for show and nothing for use."

Let me reckon up two of the chief disadvantages of Sunday travel, and two capital points in its favour. To take the disadvantages first. One must pay double toll at the turnpikes. Then, should you have the misfortune to have a breakdown, it is odds you will find no other traveller to come to your assistance, and in these circumstances you must resign yourself to spending the night in the coach.

But the advantages are not lightly to be passed over neither, and first amongst these it is to be considered that upon a Sunday there is practically no danger whatever of a hold-up. The road traffic is too slight and too uncertain to tempt a highwayman forth. Upon the seventh day, therefore, he rests like a good Christian, taking, as did Shakespeare's Falstaff, " his ease in his inn." And this is a great point gained, for the Dover Road is notorious as any in the country. Highwaymen we see none, save such as dangle from the wayside gibbets. It is easy to see that they have dressed themselves up fine to die, but their wigs hang powderless and stringy after the drizzle of overnight, and their toes point earthward in that strange almost vertical line which one sees only in a ballet girl's foot when she is pirouetting, and in that of a man that has been hanged.

There is another sterling advantage in Sunday travel, one can smuggle. The custom-house officer makes himself as scarce as the highwaymen, and of the two pests I cannot for my life decide which I abominate most. The taxes, as my father never wearied of declaring, were altogether preposterous and tyrannical, and quite against that liberty which the Englishman makes his boast. " These Whig dogs, damn them, they *starve* us ! " he loved to assert, which came quaintly from one who from the age of forty onwards never

turned the scale an ounce under sixteen stone in his socks. But he took himself and his grievances all very seriously. The duty upon a cask of French claret equalled the cost of the wine and the journey together. The duty upon tea was five shillings a pound.

Of tea, I must tell you, our womenfolk were still not a little afraid. It was a court-like, modish accomplishment to partake with an air of this strange Oriental importation, but my dear mother never failed to swallow a dram of brandy after it, as did her guests also, or else some cordial water, and this upon her doctor's most urgent recommendation, to ward off the possible ill effects. My father drank tea once with my mother, I remember, and I recollect also the very odd fashion in which he screwed up his mouth as he set down his half-tasted cup. He took a dram after it, to be sure, and from that day onwards he took the dram without the tea.

Many gentlemen were of my father's way of thinking, but not all, and the women grew to become unanimous for tea; and what, I ask you, was the result of a tax of five shillings in the pound? Two-thirds, no less, of all the tea drunk in England was smuggled. As the 'gentlemen' were at equal pains to introduce, at a Christian figure, beverages that were better worth drinking, I have often wished hearty good luck to their nocturnal exercises. We did not, I can tell you, submit with complacency to taxes which we were justified in considering extortionate. No, sir, the parson drank his smuggled brandy, and the clerk smoked his smuggled tobacco, and justices and country magistrates were well content to remain on friendly terms with gentlemen whom they very well knew to be intimately concerned with the smuggling trade. And our country wives and lasses marched to church of a Sunday in the smuggled silk

dresses, trimmed with smuggled French lace, and very captivating and dainty to be sure they looked in them.

Many were the tales told of happy and narrow escapes. It was said of one custom-house officer that, being alone upon the cliffs one dark night about Christmas time, he came unexpectedly upon a party of men landing kegs in a little cove. He was an Irishman, said the gossips, and more loyal to his liquor than his king. He showed his loyalty to the latter in a very equivocal fashion. "Do you think I can't see you landing all those little kegs upon the shore there? Well, I can. And don't you know it's against the law of the realm? Well, it is then. You can just take them all away to where you brought them from, and don't let me see any more of them," and he passed on. But I do not believe this story; the custom-house officers were both loyal and plucky, though since they were but human they were often overreached.

It was said of the old clerk of one of the Sussex churches that he stowed brandy casks in the crypt, to relieve a smuggling gentleman who was hard pressed by his pursuers. When the revenue officers appeared upon the scene their bird had flown, and they found no one but the old clerk standing upon the flagstone which concealed the stairs leading down into the crypt. One foot neatly concealing the ring, he blinked up at them through his spectacles, and made as though he was sweeping out the church with a broom. Some of the dust which he raised with his broom he threw in their eyes, for they never smoked the trick. And who shall blame him? Not I, I assure you.

At a village half-way between Canterbury and Rochester a most singular misadventure delayed our coach for a full hour. The village folk had decided to shift a windmill from one side of the road to the other, with a view to plant-

ing it upon a more advantageous site. For this uncommon operation they had selected Sunday, this being the one day when, as they imagined, there would be no road traffic to hinder their operations.

Their windmill they had mounted upon rollers, and one half the village pushing, and the remainder hauling upon ropes, they had propelled it at the time of our arrival precisely into the middle of the king's highway. But as a windmill thirty foot in height is not to be removed in a moment of time, we found our road as effectually blocked by it as a bottle is by a cork. Pickaxes had to be procured, a hedge removed, and ground levelled before we could circumnavigate this object. They detached the rope from their windmill and knotted it securely about the body of the coach, and the whole village tugging at the rope, our six horses, and ourselves with our shoulders to the wheels were no more than was barely necessary to drag our conveyance with safety over the newly troubled ground.

At Rochester I obtained a pretty view of the Medway with sloops upon the water, and merchant ships and first-rate men-of-war. You will think, perhaps, that I have detained you unnecessarily with the narration of so commonplace an occurrence as a simple journey by coach. But you must understand that such travel was by no means commonplace to *us*. To a country gentleman in my boyhood, 'town' was not London, but the capital of his *county*. Here he would have his 'town house' and pass some months of the winter. A visit to London was always an exceptional undertaking, and our language was by no means always free from the dialectical forms of the provinces.

The Londoner travelled as little as ourselves. I speak of course of the ordinary citizen, not of wealthy or exceptional individuals. The average man of the middle class seldom

journeyed beyond his neighbouring villages, Knightsbridge, for example, or Kensington, or Highgate. The roads about London were notoriously unsafe at dusk, and Highgate, I remember, had a most unenviable reputation for those who professed the ' mystery of the fatal profession of padding upon the road ' ; while for longer journeys, read the older magazines, which will tell you what we thought of *them*.

A citizen might have very valued friends or relatives in the West, but he no more thought of visiting them than of travelling to the country of Prester John. Let me quote from an old friend of my family who contributed to the ' Gentleman's Magazine ' an account of his journey to Exeter.

" After the first forty-seven miles from London, we never," says he, " set eyes on a turnpike. Dorchester," he continued, " is to us *terra incognita*, and the map-makers might . . . fill in the vacuities of Devon and Cornwall with forests, sands, elephants, savages, or what they please."

I slept my first night in London at that famous old inn the ' George and Blue Boar ' in Holborn, from which no fewer than eighty-four coaches depart in a day. Coaches for Oxford rattled away from before our doors four days in the week, and twice in the week the coaches for Bristol. There was the coach for York, too, I remember, that travelled the thirty hours of the Great North Road at the charge per head of three pounds, six shillings and threepence.

But the Exeter coach was none of ours. That put forth from the ' Saracen's Head,' Skinner Street, Snow Hill. It carried six outsides, and accomplished the whole journey in three days and a half.

I was awakened betimes my first morning in London by those famous street cries which the born Cockney prefers,

they say, to the songs of nightingales and thrushes, just as, it is said, he sleeps uneasily at his first going into the country for lack of the hoarse voice of a watchman bawling the hours. There were then so many of these itinerant 'vagrom men' that a huswife could purchase whatever she might require for household use without ever quitting her front door. My slumbers are curtailed by 'Lily White Vinegar!' by 'Cheyne Oranges,' and that picturesque old cry of 'Lanthorn and Candlelight here! Maid ho! Light here!' varied by the more prosaic 'Buy a rat-trap, a very fine rat-trap; buy my Trap.' One good fellow, discarding prose altogether as unequal to the occasion, prefers this fine lyric flight—

"My good soul
Buy a bowl!"

and then, you know, as the nursery song has it—

"Thus go the cries through Rome's fair town,
First they go up the street and then they go down."

One of the wandering fraternity piqued my curiosity not a little with a cry of: "Buy a very fine mouse-trap, or a tormentor for your fleas." Having no conception what such a piece of apparatus as a flea tormentor could resemble, I ran to my window to take observations. You Londoners have devices unknown to us in the country, but a tumbler and a dancing-girl passed between me and my pedlar on their way to set up their pitch in an adjacent alley, and my attention was further distracted by a bear ward who, with his drum, his dogs, and his bear, was bound for a bear-baiting at Hockley-in-the-Hole.

With the exception of the churches of Wren and his disciples, which are of cool grey stone, the morning sun lights up for me a city in red brick and of singular uni-

formity. It contains, I am informed (but can one believe such huge figures?), upwards of nine hundred thousand souls, and measures from Southwark to Moorfields three miles and from Hillbank to Blackwall ten.

The red brick houses of the residential quarters are from two to three stories, if we except, that is, the kitchen basements which give upon the areas. The Bedford House of Inigo Jones has served, it appears, in some measure as the model for them all. They are contrived with handsome sash windows of smallish panes of glass of some ten by twelve inches. The most part have stone facings and porches, or over-doors, or door canopies of stone sculptured. They stand back from the street behind high rails and gates, and many of these incorporate in their design the owner's scutcheon. To left and right of these gates, lamps square or globe-shaped cast so warm a glow upon the pavement as makes it at night a delight to walk on, but the light hardly penetrates to the middle of the road, and is of no great service to wheeled traffic. To left and right again of these lamps one sees those metal extinguishers in which the link boys quench their torches.

Some of these houses abut immediately upon the pathway, which in the greater thoroughfares is raised above the road level, and in the lesser, divided from the street by a line of posts. These posts are whitewashed to render them more conspicuous at night to drivers of vehicles.

Bearers of sedan chairs are, unhappily for the pedestrian, allowed to trot along these pathways. These chairmen are the most dexterous fellows in the world, and famed far and near for their strength and skill. But they cannot stop at a moment, for the fellow in the rear cannot see the obstacle, and the fellow in front is propelled forward by the weight of the chair behind; people are sometimes knocked down,

and the foreign visitor to the capital, to whom the cry of 'By your leave, sir!' or 'Have a care there!' is so much Greek, may quit the vertical plane for the horizontal and learn with displeasure that London chairmen wear heavy boots.

At the best of times these pathways of the London streets make difficult going. Bow windows from such houses as abut immediately upon them project over them for a foot or more. And sometimes, I remember, a flight of stone steps would ascend in a very stately manner from the street to the front door. These steps would cut the pathway in two; one had either to climb over them or walk round them outside the posts, to be splashed all over with mud from the wheels.

It was the golden era for signs; every tavern had its sign, every shop, and many private houses. These signs, when they did not project from the side of the house, dangled above the street centre from Homeric cross-beams. The French laughed at what one of their number termed the 'ridiculous magnificence of these triumphal arches,' and Dr Johnson triumphed in his turn over the French for not possessing in any comparable degree the amenities of the tavern-life of London.

The brackets from which some of these signs swung were smithied at the smith's forge into such an intricacy of design as made them a joy to look upon, and when the smith had dealt the last hammer-blow, the gilder would gild them. The signs were clean painted upon a base of copper, wood, or pewter, and would cost by no means infrequently so much as a hundred pounds sterling.

I can give you no idea of the prodigious effect produced by them as one walked through Fleet Street, Fetter Lane, Chancery Lane, the Strand; a jolly procession. There was

the 'Cock,' there were the 'Dolphin' and the 'Bear' and the 'Sugar Loaf' and the 'Bolt-in-Tun.' The 'Cross Keys,' the 'Cushion,' and the 'Fountain' were among the famous inns of the Strand, and the 'Swan' which stood by Somerset House.

The 'Mitre' in Chancery Lane attracted Dr Johnson by its pleasant High Church name, the hostess was an agreeable, decent body, and the great critic and greater talker would mount the throne of human felicity so often as accompanied by Mr Boswell of Auchinleck he entered upon its fire-lit recesses by way of the 'Cat and Fiddle Alley.' I found the 'Hercules Pillars' yet standing, with its memories of Pepys, and the 'Devil,' hardy palace of antique timbers, where Ben Jonson had held literary court, and drawn up poetic club rules for immortal spirits.

But the filthy state of the roads was such as perhaps this generation would hardly credit. Lord Tyrconnel pressed for reform in the House. The topic was rather a favourite of his. "The filth, sir, the filth," he used to say with unction, and then he would liken us all rhetorically to a colony of Hottentots.

Parliament Street and Pall Mall were the only streets paved with freestone. This last was our masterpiece. It was periodically sprinkled over with a preparation of sea-shells ground fine, and then rolled with rollers. Not so less courtly thoroughfares! The cobbles were of all shapes and sizes, and they would twist and quake and shiver as some heavy wagon ground them deeper into their bed of ooze. The London streets inclined inward and downward towards a central gutter, which did not carry off the water because for one reason or another something had always gone wrong with the drains!

I remember how great was my astonishment when first I surveyed the uncanny spectacle. It was in the noblest

quarter of the Strand, that portion where one approaches St Clement Danes, in walking cityward. The street centre was occupied by a miniature canal some three or four inches deep, and several feet broad, of oozy, slimy, gluey, stagnant mud. Stagnant I mean in the sense that it did not seem to flow anywhere, but, good Lord! it was whipped up and threshed about by so prodigious a quantity of traffic that not only was the pedestrian splashed from head to foot as he shrunk behind his posts, but coaches and sedans passed with raised windows to save the cushions. The ground-floor fronts of the adjoining shops dripped with the mud, and a considerable portion of a prentice's working-day was consumed in cleaning the bow windows of his master's shop. The tedium of this operation he would beguile on the approach of likely customers by standing in the doorway and bellowing "Buy! Buy! Buy!" unless indeed the master himself occupied that coign of vantage, as in his white stockings and buckled shoes, his black velvet coat with the silver buttons, his ruffles, neckcloth, and new-powdered wig, he would press his silver-laced hat to his breast while bowing to his patrons, or handing the ladies in or out of their coaches or sedans.

But the simpler or sturdier citizens laughed at mud stains. Mud stains were hardly perceptible upon the brown wig, brown stockings, and brown surtout of Dr Johnson, and his negro page-boy, Master Francis Barber, could brush them off later, or not, as the spirit moved him.

But the lady or gentleman of quality seldom set foot to ground save in well-paved Pall Mall or courtly St James's. In their gay silks and satins, their cheeks all patched and powdered and painted, the men no less than the women, they were wise not to expose their countenances to such frightful risks.

In the old days of the Stuarts, so said tradition, there had been much unseemly justling and manœuvring as to who should take the wall, who should walk, that is, hugging the houses and putting as good a distance as might be between himself and the central gutter. But in my day we were more polite. If you had the wall you were suffered to keep it, and we would any of us surrender it without question to the 'hooded maid,' as Mr Gay prettily calls the young lady who has drawn down her riding hood against the weather.

At certain intervals a causeway of better laid stones, culled with care and well joined together, admitted of pedestrians crossing the street at some few inches above the surface water of the kennel. Against this rigid obstacle the wheels of coach or wagon, driven centrewards by the press, would crack and crash, but the old coach was of good solid construction and inured to shocks.

We produced at this time work of lasting value in all the branches of the arts. The prose of our writers, even of those of the second rank, was something more than merely lucid and grammatical. Our architecture, too, was our own; it bore the hall-mark of the facture of our day. We saw the birth of a noble school of painting, while for house furnishing we need not look beyond the work of such masters as Hepplewhite, Chippendale, or the brothers Adam. But beyond all this I am of the habit of thinking that our very spoons and swords, glasses, tankards, tea-caddies, and snuff-boxes were true works of art. If such were the case, which I believe few deny, you are not to suppose that it was because we had "more time on our hands" than there is now, or because we had "nothing else to do." I need not caution you against these oft-reiterated suggestions, these perennial fallacies of thought-

less people. No thing of beauty is achieved without effort, though indeed all intellectual toil appears as mere idleness to a mob who cannot conceive of labour save as something purely physical. It was only in the fairyland of Cockaigne that the roast pig trotted up to the hungry lovers with the carving knife ready planted between his ribs. Shopkeepers' hours were from 6 a.m. to 8 p.m., with a short after-dinner siesta for the master of the shop, when he would regale moderately upon the elder-flower wine prepared by his wife or daughters. There was little luxury here, while as for the prentice boys, their beds were made up beneath the counter. Poor children were already beginning to be set to work in factories, and that for periods which would have been all too long had they been grown men. Nothing comes free cost. All living is fighting; when you cease to fight you prepare to die.

This train of thought was suggested to me one morning by the traffic, as standing well back in a court, I listened to the roar of the wheels, the oaths of the carters, the cracking of whips, and surveyed 'the different departments of life,' as a contemporary of my boyhood has it, 'all jumbled together.'

"The hod-carrier," says he, "the low mechanic, the tapster, the publican, the shopkeeper, the petti-fogger, the citizen and the courtier . . . actuated by all the demons of profligacy and licentiousness . . . are seen everywhere rambling, riding, rolling, rushing, justling, mixing, bouncing, cracking and crashing, in one vile mixture of stupidity and corruption. All," he asseverates, "is tumult and hurry; one would imagine they were impelled by some disorder of the brain that would not suffer them to be at rest. The foot-passengers run along as if they were pursued by a bailiff. The porters and chairmen trot with their burdens. People who keep their own equipages glide in their chariots like lightning. The hackney coachmen make their horses smoke, and the pavement shakes under them, and I have actually seen a waggon

pass through Piccadilly at the hand gallop. In a word," he concludes tartly enough, "the whole nation seems to be running out of its wits."

But an easy way to escape the dirt and flurry of the main streets is simply to walk parallel to them through the lanes and alleys which connect with those courts which open off from them. Having spent a long morning viewing the 'monuments and things of fame,' and having made but the usual breakfast of the day, a glass of beer, I now walk back via these lanes and courts from the Strand to Holborn. It is three o'clock. I sit down to my midday dinner.

At one end of the table there is salmon with melted butter, fennel sauce, soy and lemon pickle; at the other roast veal, with kidney beans and peas. In the middle stands a pigeon pie with yolks of eggs in it. After this course appear a ham and chickens, and after that a currant tart. Then the cloth is removed to make way for gooseberries, currants, and a melon, for mine host of the George and Blue Boar is a very pretty trencherman.

We carved from the common dishes with our own knives and forks. Several pairs of these are playing all at a time about the pigeon pie, and this polite form of fencing demands skill and address. It would not do to convey to one's mouth with a fragment of pigeon the finger or thumb of the acquaintance across the table.

Water-drinking is unknown to Londoners; they believe, with reason, that 'good eating deserves good drinking.' But their repugnance to water is based in part on medical grounds, the physicians assuring them that the practice of water-drinking in so damp a climate is highly injurious to health. Even paupers drink beer, but small beer costs but a penny the pint, and porter, excellent porter, threepence. But port is the customary dinner-drink. In a private house

you will meet with the best port that Spain produces, a pretty wine for any gentleman's drinking, but this is not the port that you will be accommodated with in the inns and taverns. Tavern port is a strange, strong, sweet, uncanonical brewage. To prepare tavern port they take the juice strained from boiled turnips and mix it for colour with that of blackberries and sloes. A strong infusion of spirits is then introduced to cause fermentation, and to this they sometimes add—but not invariably—a trifle of port wine. This, then, is the drink that fills my silver tankard—a draught for Hercules!

Dinner over, a bottle is set before me, and I loll for a few minutes over the newspapers. The 'London Advertiser' makes capital light reading, especially the advertisements. A husband warns the public not to lend or sell his wife anything on credit. Another husband advertises for his wife who has deserted him to follow a lover. There shall be no questions asked; all forgiven and forgotten.

Mr Eglinton of the 'Golden Pair of Spectacles' against the East End of the New Church in the Strand, sets forth, with a reckless profusion of capital letters, the merits of his 'Royal Beautifying Fluid,' which is to make women more dangerous than ever—

"It gives an inexpressible fine air to the Features of the Face on the Spot, and a surprising Handsomeness to the Neck and Hands, which it immediately makes exceedingly smooth, fine, and delicately white. It really gives," continues earnest Mr Eglinton, "a most agreeable, resplendent brightness . . ." (here the capitals run out, it is as though Mr Eglinton's oratory had fatigued him and he were becoming a little faint and weak) "and causes sparkling life, spirit, and juvenile bloom. . . ."

A professor of dancing of 'Duke's Long Room in Paternoster Row' next catches my eye, with the words

'Grown Gentlemen.' He teaches these grown gentlemen a minuet with the modern method of footing, in an "expeditious and genteel manner." . . . "To render the thing as private and agreeable as possible to both sexes, no lady is admitted on the Gentlemen's nights of dancing, they being absolutely and entirely by themselves, and the ladies are taught also by themselves"—an Adamless or an Eveless Eden, according to the night. But despite the professor's monastic conception of dancing, London in those days was a very gay city, and we took our pleasure with much of that full-blooded gusto which had characterised those earlier Stuarts and Elizabethans.

There were masquerades at Ranelagh with merry suppers and much dancing. There were fireworks at Vauxhall Gardens. There was cock-fighting, the Quality patronising rather the Westminster Pit, and simple Cits the 'Green Cloth' in Tottenham Court Road. There would be exhibitions of fencing also between professional swordsmen, and upon occasion by women also, with swords blunted at the point, but with half a foot of blade left sharp.

The combatants would enter the ring all seamed and scarred from ancient battles; the women would brag of their courage, the men introduce a humorous element, and pay each other grotesque compliments. Ears would be cut off in these encounters and cheeks laid open, and between the rounds the gladiators would revive themselves with Hollands, while the surgeons stitched up their wounds. But I would leave such spectacles regretting my entrance fee of half a crown, yes, I would depart with feelings of disgust. And my reason was that I found the baiting of monkeys so much more diverting.

But the bear-baiting at Hockley-in-the-Hole was hardly to be surpassed. Sometimes, too, a bull would be turned

OLD HOUSES AT THE CORNER OF CHANCERY LANE AND FLEET STREET

*(From an etching by J. T. Smith, 1789)*

loose in the ring festooned with fireworks, or fierce mastiffs would be set upon a mad bull, or even upon a lion, and on all such occasions much money would change hands.

Then there were pleasure parties to Richmond by water, and a citizen of influence could obtain his Company's barge for the expedition. I was invited to several such. We would take water at the Three Crane Stairs with a company of jolly girls and a few gay dogs who could play the flute or cornet, and such dinners as we packed into our hampers it was marvellous we could consume without predisposing all succeeding generations to apoplexy. After dinner such gentlemen as wished to, would smoke, the flute and cornet would strike up an enlivening strain, and there would be dancing on the smooth grass under the trees.

We would row back by moonlight in mighty fine trim after port and punch and Hollands, and on one such occasion, I remember, we recognised the Duke of Northumberland walking alone in his garden. We gave him three British cheers, and the Duke very courteously and affably bowed.

There was the play, of course. I remember being vastly impressed by Mr Cibber's Richard III.—improved from Shakespeare. Two lively ballets were introduced, and there was an afterpiece entitled ' Polly Honeycomb.'

Then there were pantomimes, for which species of entertainment Mr Rich's theatre of Lincoln's Inn Fields was rightly famous. I saw his pantomime of Orpheus upon the same night as his most blessed Majesty King George II. When royalty attended the play it was then the custom to post a Grenadier of the Guards on either side the stage, for purposes of ceremonial. They stood to attention with their backs to the performers, facing out into the auditorium.

Upon the night I witnessed this piece, a serpent of

enormous size, covered all over with gold and green scales and with red spots, and whose part in the piece was to kill Eurydice, raised his head upon the sudden with a tremendous hissing. One of the Grenadiers, a very blockish fellow and sleeping standing, was awakened of a sudden, and reduced to stupefaction by this apparition, he drew his sword upon the creature, and the whole house roared with laughter again and again.

Public executions were a great diversion in my boyhood, and I never witnessed such an exhibition without congratulating myself on being an Englishman and on living in a country where death pays all scores, and where legal torture —if we except whipping and the pillory—is a thing relegated altogether to foreigners, and to the barbarous ages.

Every seven weeks we would hang at Tyburn from five to fifteen footpads, horse-stealers, and highwaymen. But I never saw a man hanged save with a feeling of disgust ; my gorge would rise at such shows, and my reason was that I almost invariably had my pocket picked.

But I couldn't refrain, as indeed who could, from making a special pilgrimage to witness the execution of Earl Ferrers, the ne'er-do-well nobleman who shot his steward. To do the Earl justice he was seized with remorse, and having shot the fellow, attempted to stanch the wound and bandage him up . . . but my lord was a better marksman than surgeon, and though his intentions were excellent, he only succeeded in adding insult to injury.

It was rumoured that he had desired to be hanged in his wedding suit, which was understood to signify that he attributed all the mischances of his erratic career to his having met his wife. I can't say that I thought this gesture extremely gallant, even if the facts were as implied, but it made him a star of romance, and a great theme for pity

among the ladies. For now every little shopkeeper's wife saw her opportunity of darkly intimating that had the Earl had the good fortune to obtain *her* hand in marriage, he would not have been brought thus low, but be to-day the happiest man in the world; but there, every man was taken with a pretty face; not that Lady Ferrers had a pretty face, so they argued, she had a bad nose, she was spoiled by her forehead, her lips, her eyes, and her ears. There were hundreds prettier, and none the worse, thank Heaven, for not being so haughty!

Never were seen such crowds on the Newgate-Tyburn road! Never did the stall-keepers dispose of such quantities of Geneva gin, so many ballads, apples, oranges, so much ginger-bread, so many bags of nuts, and copies of the 'last dying confession'! While a Mrs Clifford, a particular friend of the Earl by whom he had had four children, cast by her presence an added glamour of romance over these striking proceedings.

But imagine if you can the cheers that burst forth when it was perceived that his lordship was not going to be hanged from a vulgar cart, but from his own coach drawn by six horses! Hemp being plebeian, he had bespoken himself a rope of silk, for he had respect for his rank to the last. He was wearing his wedding costume just as had been predicted, a costume which had cost I'm afraid to say how many hundred guineas, and he looked the picture of a great man, lolling back upon the cushions, and very nonchalantly taking snuff. And then, you know—

> "The maids to the windows and balconies ran,
> And wept to behold such a proper young man."

Not that Earl Ferrers was any longer young, nor could he truly be described as proper, but there was something

impressive in the extreme to see a man die so court-like.

I had a venerable aunt in those days who would occasionally enlist my services to squire her upon shopping expeditions. And upon such occasions I was less backward than you may imagine, for she had a very pretty niece. She never stirred abroad without her liveried footman who carried a wand—the last relic, had the old lady known it, of those far-off days when the armed retainer was of prime necessity, and when men sometimes owed their deaths to tumults in the streets.

My aunt wore the hoop, as did all the gentlewomen of that day, and a patch or two upon the face. She also affected the 'pom-pom,' a most absurd structure, over which her hair was trained upward to a height of nearly two feet. This astonishing machine she would adorn with all manner of toys, as ribbons and silver lace, and I remember in particular a miniature coach in glass, complete with coachman and horses. The good old lady informed me that the foible of fashionable Paris was to wear real spring or summer blossoms with the pom-pom. These blooms were kept fresh throughout a night of dancing by means of little water-bottles concealed within the framework, and as the hair thus oddly dressed was of course carefully powdered, the effect intended to be produced was that of summer in winter. But my aunt never stooped to these devices, perhaps because she cherished no great love for the French nation. Why this should have been so I am at a loss to conjecture, but it was a very prevailing prejudice of her day, and if the Cockneys of the streets fell foul of some foreigner visiting their capital, although he were a Russian wearing the furs of his native country, they supposed that the climax of insult had been achieved when they had bellowed after him, 'French dog!'

The niece wore a mob cap, a costume of silk brocade embroidered with little flowers in blue, green, and yellow, and a cherry-coloured sash. Her tiny high-heeled shoes were embroidered to match. Her cherry hair-ribbon, designed to be worn with the sash, kept tidy those tresses which—although she was only eighteen—were powdered till she made me think of 'Snow White' of the fairy story.

The shops of Ludgate Hill, with their bow windows and carved fronts, and their pretty burning wax lights—if the weather inclined to be overcast—seemed to me in those days so many gilded theatres, and the young ladies who served in them were just as obliging and polite as the real mob of London was insolent and brutal.

The master of the shop, himself a fop of no mean quality, would advance bowing: "Garden silks, ladies? Italian silks? Very fine Mantua silks? Any right Geneva velvet? English velvet? Velvet embossed?"

"This, madame," he would say, "is wonderful charming! This, madame, is so diverting a silk. This, madame, my stars! How cool it looks! But this, madame, would I had ten thousand yards of it." After this operatic overture he would gather up a sleeve and place it to the niece's shoulder. "It suits your ladyship wonderful well!" When, after infinite delays, the piece would be selected, the shopman would ask fifteen shillings a yard, and my aunt would endeavour to cheapen him five.

Upon one of our shopping excursions we wandered into St Paul's Churchyard, when we came all of a sudden upon the unhappy Mr Ward standing in the pillory. He had been the secretary to the Duchess of Buckingham, and upon retiring from active life, being persuaded that his conscientious services demanded a liberal gratuity, had written

himself an IOU for fifteen hundred pounds, which he had signed in admirable imitation of her Grace's signature.

Nobody would have fathomed Mr Ward's ingenious device had not a prying juryman discovered that the date of the IOU was previous to the date of the issue of the paper, as discoverable from the water-mark. The pillory for Mr Ward!

Being an unfortunate body of poor physique, he displayed some ingenuity in mitigating the rigours of his position. He engaged two men-servants to stand, one on either side of him, upon the pillory footboard, to ply him with strong waters should he show signs of fainting, while to ward off the crowd he had hired fifty hackney coaches for two hours each, which he caused to be drawn up in a compact military square of which he was the centre. The coachmen were loyal to their trust, so that the mob could not get near him to pelt him with such refuse as fish, eggs, and cats. You may think I intend to rally you when I mention cats as missiles, but I assure you the mob stored up these playthings in waiting against such occasions.

As we passed, Mr Ward was fainting for the second time, and being but a boy and with all the coxcombry of youth that would for ever be setting the world to rights, and to show my originality and wit, I ventured to express a doubt as to whether any Government had a right to torture men so.

My aunt was most indignant. Surely King George's ministers understood these matters better than I, a mere schoolboy, could pretend to do! I was little better than a Jacobite! Mr Ward was an odious wretch for trying to rob the dear Duchess, and if the mob *had* broken through and pelted him quite to death with dead tomcats, then that would only have been what he had *richly* deserved!

You will think I am sending you a very long and rambling memorial of a past generation, but I cannot conclude without the briefest possible account of a trip which we undertook to Ranelagh by water.

As we approached the water stairs—my aunt, the niece, and I—the usual tumult arose amongst the watermen, all hustling, and justling, and touting together for our custom.

Shouts of 'Oars! Oars!' arose from those boatmen whose craft could boast two pairs of oars, and 'Sculler! Sculler!' from the singles. I point with my finger to a likely looking bandit in woollen jersey and sailor's kilt who elbows a way for us, while his fellows fall to abusing him in such terms as none but a lexicographer could fittingly answer. But this puts me in the thought that a lexicographer *did* on some occasion silence one of these fellows—do you recall the sally of Dr Johnson? If not, I shall not divulge it in this chaste epistle—it came a little surprisingly from the 'grave professor of moral and religious wisdom,' but the laugh remained with him, and that was a great matter gained.

The insolence of all these water rats was insufferable, and my aunt would disgustedly tell me that in her young days, so often as Queen Anne would take the water in her royal barge, these rascals would shout after her, 'Old Brandy Shop!'—as supposing their royal mistress to be a dear lover of the bottle.

We secured our places on a double sculler, but our fellows rested upon their oars a moment to survey with critical interest a scene of lively animation enacting upon the bank. A porter, loafing amongst the watermen, had roused the ire of a somewhat foppishly attired young gentleman, who was seen flinging aside coat, sword, wig, and hat, and offering to pommel the offender. A battle royal

ensues, in the course of which the porter's heels are tripped up, and he is sent flying over backwards with blood gushing from a broken nose. Amidst general derision the porter picks himself up from the mud, feels his teeth to make sure he has lost none, wipes his bloody nose upon his sleeve, and growls not ungallantly : " Damned sure you're the son of a porter, not a lord, you use your fists too well."

" It's Lord Herbert, lady," both the boatmen explain at once. They give us to understand that the young nobleman makes a hobby of pugilism, and has gained an enviable reputation at these random encounters. The honest fellows appear full of pity for us, and for myself in particular, that I am unacquainted with a notability so capital in the sporting world of his day.

Pugilism is a useful art, for if a gentleman were to draw sword upon any one of these rascals in particular, they would resent it in a body, and he would run a serious risk of being torn in pieces. And what an excellent thing this is, if one regards human life as something worth preserving. It is still the knife that decides amongst plebeians all quarrels in France, and Italy, and Holland. While Lord Herbert and the porter wallow and thump one another, the little niece in great agitation clutches my arm, but then, to my chagrin, my aunt instinctively withdraws her gaze from the combatants : " Don't be a fool, child," she observes with tart composure, and stuffs first one nostril and then the other with snuff from her china box.

Ranelagh, if we set aside its extensive gardens, consists of an immense circular saloon of a diameter of a hundred and eighty feet. Tiers of boxes give upon this arena, the lower tiers being permanently open, but the highest row contains boxes which can be closed and made quite private at will, and which are reputed for so many islands of Cythera.

In the centre of the great arena a gigantic stove with a deal of polished brass-work warms the whole place to admiration. The lighting is effected by a prodigious number of lustres and candelabra in the shape of stars, moons, crescents and the like, which light this vast enclosure with the softest imaginable radiance.

My aunt, whose foible it is to regard me always as the country bumpkin, points out at every step some well-known character of London life.

" You see, nephew, that gentleman with the fine coat, the huge domed forehead, and the very little nose ? That is Mr Gibbon, the infidel historian. If he had his deserts he would be set in the pillory, like your friend Mr Ward, instead of flaunting it here amidst good Christians with his hair tied in a silk bow !

" That very aristocratic looking gentleman, who has so much the air of the great world, is my Lord Chesterfield, the witty Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland. But though he is always the soul of politeness in his dealings with us, it transpires that he is at heart very cynical with regard to women, and I dare say, if the truth were known, he is all of a piece for iniquity with Mr Gibbon. He loves Ranelagh so well that he laughingly declares that he has given orders for all his letters to be addressed here.

" Now *there*, nephew, in that box with the ladies, you may see the glory of our age, a man of a very different stamp altogether. That is the great and moral Dr Johnson, the lexicographer, a model I never weary of proposing to all the young fellows to follow. The folly and profligacy of the age receives no countenance from *him*, I can assure you. He has rather a sad face. He has no ear for music, they say, but he seems to enjoy the punch and sliced beef. Bless me, nephew, how disgustingly he eats ; to

be moral is really no excuse for comporting oneself like a cannibal.

" Here, come quickly, surely fortune favours us and all London is here to-night. I am going to point you out a great character, a very notable character indeed, Horace Walpole, the virtuoso. He just missed being shot through the head by ' The Gentleman Highwayman ' in Hyde Park some short while back. He is one of the luminaries of taste of the day and has built himself, so I understand, a truly captivating Gothic castle, complete with torture chambers (I believe), a rose garden, and a library of belles-lettres, at Twickenham. He is a son of the *great* Sir Robert, the politician or whatever he was."

The notable character turns about, and seeing my aunt pointing him out to us with her fan, observes caustically to a friend : " We walk with a crowd at our heels, like two chairmen going to a fight ! " . . .

Some of the more youthful spirits bring the objection against Ranelagh that, except on masquerade and special ball nights, there is no dancing. Mr Smollett, for instance, makes his Squire Bramble complain that one does nothing but walk round and round, ' like blind asses in a mill.' And I can quote you the lines of a doggerel wit who, in some such verses as these, mocks both at this walking in the ring, and at the low-neck dresses of our fashionable beauties—

" A thousand feet rustled on mats,
And a carpet that once had been green,
Men bowed in their outlandish hats,
With corners so fearfully keen.
Fair maids who at home in their haste
Had left all clothing else but a train,
Swept the floor clean as slowly they paced,
Then walked round and swept it again."

But here is good food and drink, good music and singing, a great fire, candlelight, youth, bright eyes, and a merry, animated company. For my part I asked no better than to waste my time there.

I would return o' nights to the George and Blue Boar, to my bedchamber which opened upon one of the upper galleries, and while the wind from the coach-yard blew beneath my door, raising the carpet and threatening to extinguish the dip which I had placed for more security in the wide grate of the old-fashioned fireplace, I would relive the scene again. I would sink to rest on my feather mattress, behind those heavy bed-hangings which set cold and wind at defiance, and think of London after the fashion of that witty Johnson: "Here is everything to make life pleasant; when you are tired of London, you are tired of life."

My visit to the metropolis was all too short for my liking, though I don't care greatly to remember that I made it more than a little above half a century ago. And if I were to see London again, your London of to-day, should I find it improved and beautified? I am very confident that I should not; I should find that something had vanished which gave a zest to all.

Could we live our lives again, would it really give us pleasure? We should encounter the same villains with a dash of good in them, the same heroes with a dash of the villainous, greatness in poverty, fools flourishing, and all the old fears and hopes and passions and follies and errors. There would be the same intrigues, the same love interest, and the four same principal set pieces of the scenery—painted, I grant you, by a master hand — Spring and Summer, Autumn and Winter.

Could we endure a constant repetition of these phenomena? Surely not. A second performance would prove

insufferably tedious, and if we were condemned to endure a third, I fancy we should brush the flints of our pistols, look well to the priming, and contrive our own exits. Yet I regard myself as a lover of life, not a cynic. Life is a comedy which it is good both to see and to act in—once.

As I had come into London by coach, I thought to add to my experiences by making the return journey by sea, and was so fortunate as to secure a berth in the 'Charming Betty,' merchantman, which was to touch at Dover upon her voyage to the Levant. That journey home by water took me thirty hours, and I am not likely to forget it, for truly I was abominably seasick the whole time.

THE END